

A SURVEY OF
ANGLO-INDIAN
FICTION

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PREFACE

ANGLO-INDIAN writers of fiction enable Indians to see themselves as 'others', or their rulers see them

Incidentally they also enable us to see our masters as they see themselves—not as demi gods, as we had imagined them to be, but as human beings and with the common weaknesses of human beings. We find them nearer to us in fiction than in our contact with them in official life

Anglo-Indian fiction is a criticism of the life of English men and Englishwomen in India, and of Indians. This book is a criticism of that criticism. Its only justification is that it may help our critics to see themselves as an Indian sees them

I am glad to take this opportunity of thanking my friends Professors Churanjiva Lal Mathur and Krishan Datta Aggarwal, my brother L. Dharmpal Gupta, my friends and pupils L. Radha Krishan Sud. M.A., Mr. Krishan Murari, B.A. LL.B. and L. Har Narain Batra B.A., LL.B., for help in compiling the bibliography and useful suggestions, L. Labhu Ram, Librarian Punjab University Library, L. Ram Labhaya Librarian, Punjab Public Library, and L. Ram Lubhaya Sabhhlok Librarian, Dyal Singh College Library for making available books that could not be easily obtained. Principal Hem Raj and the Dyal Singh College Trust Society for sanctioning extra money for the purchase of Anglo-Indian fiction and Dr. E. D. Lucas of the Forman Christian College, Lahore for his interest in this work

BHUPAL SINGH

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CONTENTS

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTORY

1

1 Use of the phrase Anglo-Indian fiction 2 Three periods of Anglo-Indian fiction 3 Main ingredients of a novel of Anglo-Indian life. 4 Early Anglo-Indians 5 Qui Hai of the early nineteenth century 6 Competition Wallah 7 Anglo-India to-day its characteristics—imperialistic but isolated discriminately hospitable its monotony its snobbery its melancholy its conservatism its calling hour its indifference to religion its social constitution religion of work misrepresentation of Anglo-Indian women

CHAPTER II MEADOWS TAYLOR AND OTHER PREDECESSORS OF KIPLING

31

8 Beginnings of Anglo-Indian fiction 9 W B Hockley 10 Scott's *The Surgeon's Daughter* 11 Dickens and India 12 Thackeray and India 13 Meadows Taylor—*Confessions of a Thing* *Tippoo Sultan* Taylor's historical trilogy his general characteristics 14 Other novelists 1834-33 15 W D Arnold 16 Post Mutiny novels 1839-69 17 Precursors of Kipling—Phil Robinson Prichard Cunningham Alexander Allardyce

CHAPTER III RUDYARD KIPLING

68

18 Kipling's Anglo-Indian stories 19 Kipling's Indian stories 20 *Kim* and *The Naulahka* 21 Kipling's limitations 22 Kipling's knowledge of Indian women

CHAPTER IV RUDYARD KIPLING AND HIS SCHOOL

83

23 Influence of Kipling on short story writers 24 Mrs F A Steel 25 Mrs Alice Perrin 26 Otto Rothfeld and Andrus 27 Edmund Candler 28 Sir Edmund Cox Herbert Sherring Richard Dehan E M Dell A T Marris and John Eyton 29 Afghan 30 The Rance of Sarawak Maud Diver and Mrs E W Savi 31 Hilton Brown 32 Miss Mayo Mrs L A Beck and Mr Humfrey Jordan 33 Kipling and his imitators—Talbot Mundy Ganpat and Al'té Eustace 34 Foran Somers and A E R Craig 35 Kim's cousins 36 S K Ghosh

CONTENTS

CHAPTER V NOVELS OF ANGLO-INDIAN LIFE—1 109

- 37 Mrs B M Croker 38 Mrs Maud Diver 39 'John Travers' (Mrs G H Bell) 40 Mrs Alice Perrin 41 Mrs L W Savil 42 Shelland Bradley

CHAPTER VI NOVELS OF ANGLO-INDIAN LIFE—2 136

- 43 Frontier novels—S S Thorburn, Captain Bedford Forin, W G Curtis Morgan 44 Sir Francis Younghusband 45 'Afghan', Michael John, John Delbridge, and Mrs I Pennell 46 Novels of Anglo-Burmese life 47 Novel of missionary life—Mrs Alice Perrin, Mrs I F Penny, Henry Bruce, Mrs Margaret Wilson, Dr Mary Schurlich, and Honore Wallis Morrois 48 Life in the moffusil—Mrs Isabel Mountain, Hilton Brown, John Eyton and Edward Thompson

CHAPTER VII NOVELS OF MIXED MARRIAGES AND EURASIAN LIFE 165

- 49 (a) Marriage of an Englishman with an Indian girl—J W Sherer, G Diet, Donald Sinderby, Mrs Maud Diver, and Rev. Gerald Campbell (b) Marriage of an English girl with an Indian—Mrs I E Penny, Mrs E W Savil, A I R Craig, L Maddock, S H Woolf, John Eyton, *The Confessions of a Princess* by ?, Jane Hukl 50 Novels of Eurasian life—Mrs Milne Rae, P C Wren, Miss Irene Burn, Shelland Bradley 51 Eurasian beauty 52 Henry Bruce 53 The Rance of Sarawal

CHAPTER VIII INDIAN POLITICS AND ANGLO-INDIAN NOVELS 195

- 54 Beginnings of Indian nationalism—Mrs I E Penny, A F Wallis, Beresford, Hobart-Hampden 55 Edmund Candler and Indian unrest, Miss Irene Burn and Henry Bruce 56 Novels of the second period of Indian nationalism—Mrs L W Savil, R J Minney, Lieut-Col W P Drury, H K Gordon 57 Novels of the third period of Indian nationalism—Y Endrikar, Mrs Beatrice Sheepshanks, Hamish Blair, Mrs Theodore Pennell, and S Woods Hill

CHAPTER IX. E M FORSTER AND EDWARD THOMPSON 221

- 58 *A Passage to India* 59 Edward Thompson

CHAPTER X INDIAN HISTORY IN ANGLO INDIAN FICTION 41

60 Buddhist period 61 Hindu period—Ayyar 6 Mughal period—Mrs F A Steel L H Myers 63 Seventeenth century Aurangzeb and Shivaji 64 East India Company—Sydney C. Grier (Miss Hilda Gregg) Frank R Sell 65 Begum Somru—Lt Gen G F MacMunn Mrs G H Bell and V E Bannisdale 66 Wars in the nineteenth century 67 Novels of the Indian Mutiny 68 Siege of Delhi and Mrs Steel—*On the Face of the Waters* 69 Annexation of Upper Burma—Miss Tennyson Jesse

CHAPTER XI THE MYSTERIOUS EAST OR THE ANGLO INDIAN MYSTERY NOVELS 68

70 Jewel hunting—Marion Crawford L Bamburg Ganpat J I Emery Lady Chitty Helen Fairley John Easton Eleanor Pegg Arthur Greening Joan Conquest G E Locke 71 Novels of the occult—John Henry Willmer Mme Z L. Cavalier C E Bechhofer R E Goddard Mrs L A Beck 7 Novels dealing with conspiracy against the British Raj—John Ferguson Alastair Shannon Mrs L A Beck Alexander Wilson Sir Henry Sharp Hazel Campbell

CHAPTER XII EAST AS SEEN BY WEST OR ANGLO INDIAN NOVELS OF INDIAN LIFE 283

73 Mrs F E Penny—The mysterious East Life of the zenana Indian marriage Mrs Penny's characters and her descriptions 74 Edmund White 75 R J Minney 76 Conclusion

APPENDIX A NOTE ON SOME INDIAN WRITERS OF ENGLISH FICTION 306

BIBLIOGRAPHY 311

- (a) A List of Anglo-Indian Novels
- (b) Criticism and Biography
- (c) Articles and Reviews

A GLOSSARY OF INDIAN WORDS USED IN THE BOOK 337

INDEX 340

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

THE phrase 'Anglo-Indian fiction' may be used in a broad or narrow sense. Broadly speaking it includes any novel dealing with India which is written in English. Strictly speaking it means fiction mainly describing the life of Englishmen in India. In a still narrower sense it may be taken to mean novels dealing with the life of Eurasians who now prefer to be called Anglo-Indians. A very large number of novels surveyed in this book are Anglo-Indian in the sense that they describe the life of Englishmen and Englishwomen in India. But the survey does not exclude Indian novels written by men of nationalities other than the English. It also includes novels describing the life of Eurasians and of Indians.

2 Anglo-Indian fiction covers a period of about a century and a half. It may be divided into three periods. The first period begins with the Governor-Generalship of Warren Hastings and ends with the Indian Mutiny; the second period ends with the death of Queen Victoria and the publication of *Ann* in 1901; the third period begins with the Partition of Bengal in 1905 and may be said to be still in progress. The present survey, however, does not extend beyond the year 1930 which saw the publication of Edward Thompson's book, *A Larenell to India*.¹ Meadows Taylor and W. D. Arnold are the chief novelists of the first period, Sir Henry Cunningham and Kipling of the second, Edmund Candler, E. M. Forster and Edward Thompson of the third. The novels of the first period are mainly romances of Indian history, or are descriptive sketches of English society in India; those of the second period are portraits of the official life of Anglo-India, mainly satirical; those of the third period show a vaster range in the choice of subjects and are a true reflex of the varied life and problems of India in transition. The

¹ Some novels after 1930 also have been discussed.

first period shows the great influence of Scott on Anglo-Indian fiction and a little of Thackeray, the second period prepares the way for and sees the rise of Kipling, the third period continues the traditions of Kipling and shows some reaction against them.

3 *Main ingredients of a novel of Anglo-Indian life*

A typical novel generally begins with a voyage, bringing the hero, more often the heroine, to the shores of India. On her arrival in a Presidency town or a mofussil 'station' she is welcomed by a father, aunt, or some distant relation, and invariably causes a flutter in the small Anglo-Indian colony there. She becomes the belle of the season, is much sought after, and goes through the usual round of Anglo-Indian gaieties. There follow accounts of *burra-khanas*, shooting-parties (generally tiger-hunts), picnics, visits to places of historical interest, balls and dances with their *kala-juggas*, and race-meetings. There are scandals and gossips at the club regarding her 'doings', interlaced with love-rivalries and misunderstandings, and finally everything ends in a happy marriage. A baboo, a begum, a nawab or a rajah, or a political agitator is thrown in for local colour, or to supply the villain indispensable to a work of fiction. There are, of course, many variations of the theme, but this may be taken as a skeleton of a typical Anglo-Indian novel. The hero, a handsome, strong subaltern, or a struggling assistant in the Civil Service, is seldom a model of virtue, but has invariably one merit: he is conscientious in the discharge of his duties. He risks his life in doing this, and whatever may be the trials and temptations of his position, he always remembers that upon him depends the prestige of the British Empire. He may make a fool of himself at the club or the regimental mess, he may gamble, drink, incur debts, and fight, but the moment he is dealing with an Indian

He only knows that not through him

Shall England come to shame.

The heroine of an Anglo-Indian novel is spirited beautiful courageous and a good rider. She can talk well and like the hero mentioned above has a proper sense of her responsibility as an Englishwoman in India. In spite of these admirable qualities she behaves foolishly and involves herself in awkward situations from which it is the duty of the hero to extricate her. In most cases however she is a mere puppet. More interesting and individualized than the regulation heroine is the scandal mongering, bitter tongued gossip loving spinster or the frivolous married woman the peculiar product of Anglo Indian life. It is she who relieves the monotony of life keeps the clubs going and is the chief source of attraction in a hill station. It is she who enlivens the dull and dreary pages of Anglo-Indian novels. Some novels describe the beauty of Indian mountain scenery the loneliness silence and spaciousness of our jungles the splendour of our blue skies and starry nights the sights and sounds of the bazaars the scenes of sweating shouting brown humanity on a railway platform, and the picturesqueness, variety, and squalor of Indian life in towns and in villages. Occasionally we get a glimpse of the zenana an account of a nautch Indian marriage or funeral, the description of a communal riot or an epidemic and a skilful handling of the problems arising out of the contact and conflict of East and West.

The mood in which these novels are written is generally one of disgust sorrow, or melancholy. The sense of their being exiles in a foreign land seldom deserts the English in India. Separation from their friends and families and the varied intellectual and civilized life of the West the constant journeyings the oppressiveness of the Indian climate in summer the monotony of official life and the feeling that doing one's duty in India is a thankless job—all these impart to the most frivolous novel a note of sadness.

A common theme of these novels is the unhappiness

misunderstandings, and complexities of married life in India. Of course unhappy married life is not a feature peculiar to Anglo-India. Marriages go wrong all over the world. But taking into consideration the comparatively small number of the English in India, it is surprising that year after year novels should be written whose only interest lies in unhappy Anglo-Indian marriages. Love and marriage constitute the main staple of fiction. But the chief *motif* of Anglo-Indian fiction is not so much crossed love as the misery of married life.

Artistically Anglo-Indian fiction is a record of the ephemeral. Excepting Kipling, there are not more than a dozen novels which may find a place in the history of English literature. Most of the modern Anglo-Indian novels are written by women. Most of them show little sense of style, are poor in characterization and plot construction, and occasionally suffer from a propagandist tendency. They are, however, valuable as showing how India has affected our rulers. If there are few instances of imaginative creation in Anglo-Indian fiction, it is at least remarkable for one character, i.e. Anglo-India.

4 *Early Anglo-Indians*

The earliest Anglo-Indians are known as 'nabobs' in English literature. But the nabob of the English comedies is frankly a caricature of an Old Indian, if not a mythical monster. He is generally described as a parchment-faced, diseased-livered, wealthy, vulgar, and effeminate being whose only function (according to English comedians) was to make the audience laugh and to make a profligate nephew or an impecunious niece happy at the end of the fifth act or the third volume. But he cannot be taken as an average Englishman in India of the eighteenth century. He represents the wealth, extravagance, luxury, and vulgarity of a very few Anglo-Indians, but not their good points. He does not represent those Anglo-Indians who

could not return to England because they were not rich he does not represent the life of loneliness and suffering or the struggles and trials of the earlier English adventurers in India who were never heard of in England. In view of the fact that only those Englishmen who had amassed much wealth could afford to return to England it is not surprising that the English got the idea that all early Anglo Indians were nabobs and that India was an El Dorado. Contemporary memoirs and histories give a more accurate idea of the actual conditions of life here of the wretchedness and desolation of friendless exiles separated from all that was dear to them in a country where there was no one to relieve their sorrow by one gleam of sympathy or kindness. We learn from Lord Teignmouth's (then Mr Shore) biography that he had to tear himself from his wife twice because he could not expose her to the horrors of the deep and to the dangers of a savage country like India that there were not two houses in Calcutta with venetian blinds or glass windows and that his salary as a writer in 1769 was eight rupees a month. The *Oriental Memoirs* of Forbes furnish the best picture of the cheerless life of a young English adventurer on his arrival in Bombay. He describes himself as a solitary deserted being who had to go to bed sorely against his will soon after sunset because he could not afford the luxuries of a supper and a candle. This too is not typical of the life of all Englishmen in all parts of the country but it is useful as a corrective to the caricatures of the nabobs. Sydney C Grier (Miss Hilda Gregg) has described the lives of her countrymen in India in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries or as she herself puts it during the earlier stages of what it is correct to call the expansion of England in *In Furthest Ind* (1894). Although it lacks the intimate knowledge of a contemporary document yet as a general picture of the time her account may be taken as correct. She tells us that the Company's servants went about in *palenkeens* dressed in white to

avoid the heat of the sun, that 'meats' were served on plates of china 'that cracks when any poison touches it', that behind each Englishman at the dinner table 'stood an Indian servant with a great fan of peacock feathers', and that royal ceremony was observed in bringing in and removing the dishes.

It will therefore be useful to discard the use of the word 'nabob' in connexion with Anglo-Indians of the seventeenth, the eighteenth, and the first quarter of the nineteenth centuries. It is better to call them Old Indians. Most of them, however, resembled a nabob in their love of show and fondness for pleasure. They were semi-orientals in their habits and manners of life, loving 'splendid sloth and languid debauchery'.¹ They married Indian women or entered into liaisons with them. At the back of their compound they had their zenana, where wandered a crowd of olive-coloured children. If they married English or European girls, they lived in a separate establishment, but not in such seclusion as was preferred by their Indian wives or mistresses. Even Englishwomen succumbed to the eastern environment. They smoked hookahs, drank claret and beer, and left their children to the care of Indian servants. Expensive dinners and horse-racing involved young 'writers' in debts. The then prevalent style of wearing the hair required the 'obvious aid of huge cushions and masses of tow or horse hair'.² Pelleting, or making pellets of bread and flicking them across the table into the mouth of a gentleman as he opened it to speak, was considered by some ladies the finest of entertainments. The life of English officers in up-country stations is summed up by Warren Hastings (*The Great Proconsul*, by Sydney C. Grier). These officers were devoted to their duties and field sports, they displayed an admirable interest in Indian arts and letters, but they were 'almost as far removed as the Gentoos themselves

¹ Sir G. O. Trevelyan, *Competition Wallah*

² *The Great Proconsul*, p. 79

from the society of Europeans. They often devoted themselves to the acquisition of a fortune,

'with no higher end in view than to return to England as a nabob displaying the usual marks of the species—a chariot at his door madeira on his table gold lace on his coat and a black behind his chair (p 23)

The usual mode of travel of Englishmen of average means was in palanquins or chariots borrowed from wealthy baboos. Men of position rode in state coaches with *musalchis chobdars* and a dozen servants running before and behind their carriage shouting their titles. Most of them seem to have lost the will as well as the power to return to England. Those who returned to England felt as if in a foreign land. By the second quarter of the nineteenth century they were becoming as rare as a mummy¹

5 *Qui Hai' of the early nineteenth century* •

The Old Indian imperceptibly changed into the *Qui Hai* of the pre Mutiny India. The Old Indian of 1845 is a different being from his prototype of 1785. We may distinguish him from his predecessor by calling him *Qui Hai* a phrase common enough in the Anglo Indian literature of this period. Several novels published between 1825 and 1844 show how a *Qui Hai* differed from or resembled an Old Indian. Unlike the Old Indian he gave up Indian zenanas and some oriental habits. Marriages with Indian girls did not cease altogether, but became less common. Love for the hookah still continued and so did love of luxury and dissipation. The Old Indian was an Indianized Englishman. *Qui Hai* retained his English habits and mode of life. Thackeray's sketches of James Binnie Joseph Sedley and Colonel Newcome are sketches of *Qui Hais* who in their turn have now become as extinct as the nabob or the Old Indian.

¹ *Calcutta Review* 1844 p 10.

The Old Indians, as seen in the romance- and romance-like books of travel (allowing for a little exaggeration), are generally 'ill-mannered, illiterate, and immoral'. The pictures of Old Indians are made up of 'unrightly groups of unprincipled adventurers—dissolute soldiers, corrupt civilians, usurious merchants—all alike ignorant and immoral'. The Old Indians of the second quarter of the nineteenth century, whom we have called *Qu' Hais*, are no longer isolated savages dwelling in a remote country, where 'the sound of the church-going bell' is never heard, and the light of European science and literature never dawns upon the benighted vision. The Old Indian was cut off from England, the *Qu' Hais* was only a week behind his brothers and cousins in England. In the earlier period, the almost complete isolation from Europe of Englishmen in India tended to foster among them the growth of certain vices, such as avarice, lust, cruelty, &c. The moral and intellectual improvement of the Anglo-Indian of the first half of the nineteenth century was due to the steamship, to the example set before their countrymen by a number of Governor-Generals after Warren Hastings, and the establishment of the College of Fort William. Still, a *Qu' Hais* has not shaken off all the vices of his predecessor. How he appeared to an Englishman with the highest moral ideals, like W. D. Arnold, may be seen in *Oakfield*. In his amusements, 'pig-sticking', snipe-shooting, horse-racing, cricket matches, picnics, balls, and banquets, the *Qu' Hais* is as deeply absorbed as the Old Indian, also in his indifference towards, or lack of sympathy for, the people in whose midst he lived, and in openly treating a 'black fellow' as a beast, 'to be driven, or otherwise employed, as seems fit to the white man, his master',² he is the lineal descendant of the Old Indian.

The Baboo and Other Tales (1834), a novel descriptive of society in Calcutta, portrays a number of characters who may be taken to represent *Qu' Hais*. Lady Wroughton,

¹ *Calcutta Review*, 1846

² *Long Engagements*

living in royal style, holding her levees, and spending money without caring how it was earned is a portrait of a society lady of the time. Captain Forester is described as lost to Anglo India being too fond of black velvet.

Scribbleton Papers in *Anglo India* (1840) gives some sketches of Madras *Quis Hais*. Old Jeremiah Lawson Chief Judge of the Sudder ud Dawlat to whom Miss Scribbleton was promised as a bride is a caricature of a *Quis Hai*. A more interesting and human book giving a faithful portrait of bygone manners and customs is *The Lady of the Manor* (1844) by Mrs Sherwood. The story of Olivia's life in her semi-orientalized uncle's household is the sad story of the steady degeneration of a girl of eighteen during her stay in India. Mrs B M Croker writing at a time when skirt dancing was as yet in its infancy and a lady figurante was a rare spectacle on an Indian stage gives us a picture of a *Quis Hai* a man who had lived so long here that he had become fossilized.

Nothing outside India appealed to him the easy going life had penetrated to his very bones he had his well trained servants his excellent food and liquor his cheroot or his hukka his *Pioneer* his long armchair and his pet grievance.¹

6 *Competition wallah*

After the Mutiny and the institution of the Bengal Civil Service the *Quis Hais* began to die out. In several books we find echoes of rivalry between *Quis Hais* or Anglo Indians of the old school and what the latter contemptuously styled Competition Wallahs. The *Quis Hais* were trained for service in India at Haileybury. Haileybury men were proud of themselves. Sir G O Trevelyan in his letters written about the beginning of 1863 published under the title *The Competition Wallah* shows how the Anglo Indians of the old school looked down upon the new civilians and laughed at them. *Married in India*

(1910), by Constance Howell (a story of Anglo-Indian life in the 'sixties), contains an interesting passage showing the attitude of the post-Mutiny Anglo-Indian towards India, as well as his characteristics.

'Forty years ago, imperialistic sentiment did not exist. The English were not proud of the immense country they had conquered including all India in a comprehensive contempt—they detested its climate, denied its interest, belittled its artistic achievements, abhorred its dark-skinned peoples, despised its language, and this condition of feeling was much stronger in the army than in the Civil Service. Army men professed to think that their own countrywomen had deteriorated by coming to the inferior land, and "I would never marry in India," was a phrase fashionable among them notwithstanding which affectation, many officers' marriages did happen in India' (29-30)

In this book the author explains the difficulties of English soldiers and civilians, with inadequate salaries and no private means, when they contemplated marriage in India. We learn that the railway did not exist beyond Cawnpore and the sahibs had to travel in *doolis*, each carried by four *kahars*. Their luggage was brought in *baghis* escorted by native policemen.

Mr. Wetherall, the subaltern, is a typical soldier of the time. To him all Indians are niggers and 'lying rascals', who can be brought to their senses only by means of the whip. He is immensely pleased when his fiancée tells him the interesting story of how a poor copra-wallah was knocked down because he refused to sell his wares at the price which the frivolous Miss Avice Featherstonehaugh offered for them. Mr. Alexander Allardyce gives a portrait of a *Qin Hai* in the person of Eversley in *The City of Sunshine* (1874), while Sir Henry Cunningham gives a pen-portrait of an Anglo-Indian of the new type in the character of Desvœux, 'a poetical dandy', dressed with a sort of 'effeminate finery'.

'He was far too profusely set about with pretty things,

lockets and rings and costly knick knacks on the other hand his handkerchief was tied with a more than Byronic negligence (vol 1 p 81)

Desvœux is a civilian of the new regime, a competition wallah and has his fling at the old ones

But you know he says to Miss Vernon how the old ones were chosen All the stupidest sons of the stupidest families in England for several generations like the pedigree wheat you know on the principle of selection none but the blockheads of course would have anything to do with India (vol 1 p 90)

In Boldero Sir Henry Cunningham has drawn a sketch of a district officer of the seventies He is represented as over zealous for the improvement and regeneration of mankind disgusted with the complex machinery of government in which he saw material, money and time wasted office coming to dead lock with office one blundering head knocking against another wants to which no one attended wrongs which no one avenged He drove the Municipal Committee wild with projects of reform He offended the doctors by invading the hospitals the chaplain by objecting to the ventilation of the church and the length of sermons the Educational Department by a savage tirade on the schools, and the General by a bold assault on the drainage of the barracks — altogether a bustling joyous irrepressible sort of man In Blunt the author has projected a Competition Wallah into a Board the other two members of which were educated at Haileybury to illustrate the difference between the two types of officials Sir Henry Cunningham acknowledges that the vile corruption which characterized the East India Company in its earlier days which fired the righteous wrath of Burke had disappeared but Indian Governments had long remained the home of jobbery and

The stringent remedy of the Competitive System had been

necessary to deal with the accumulated dullness with which licensed favouritism had crowded the ranks of the service.' (p 224)

In *The Old Missionary* (1897), Sir W W Hunter puts the following words into the mouth of a Lieutenant Governor of Bengal.

'You Competition men come to Bengal with your heads full of ideas, and you expect me to find the money to carry them out Why cannot you be content with things as you find them, as we were before you ? It is only a few years since poor John Company was shovelled underground, and already his peaceful ways seem to belong to a remote antiquity ' (p 9.)

In the last twenty years of the nineteenth century the few *Qui Hais*, left behind in the onward march of British administration, finally disappeared, having been replaced by Competition Wallahs There is no *Qui Hai* in the next novel of Sir Henry Cunningham published nine years later In Philip Ambrose he has depicted the temptations of a young, charming Indian Civil Servant without much character and experience Kipling's Anglo-India is the India of Englishmen of the new régime With the beginning of the twentieth century the Competition Wallahs begin to be referred to as 'heaven-borns' by members of other services Present-day Anglo-India is the India of the I C S , other services do not count for much Military Anglo-India has lost much of its importance in these days of peace.

In several other modern novels there is an occasional reference to the type of Anglo-Indian who has now become extinct In *The Star of Destiny* (1920) by Mr H M F Campbell we find an account of an Anglo-Indian of the old school These old Anglo-Indians 'regarded the native as a being of a totally different and necessarily inferior order of creation', they learned as little of his language as was possible and deliberately anglicized it, they thought it was impossible to understand India and there was no use in doing so They therefore made no effort to under-

stand the country of their adoption ¹ They came to India to amass a fortune, and were not too particular how they did it They enjoyed unlimited freedom and their authority was unquestioned and they held the life of an Indian cheap ²

7 *Anglo India to day*

(1) *Imperialistic but isolated* The Anglo Indian of to day has not that profound contempt for natives which distinguished his countrymen of the post Mutiny period nor is he so deliberately ignorant of the language customs and history of India and her people But he is proud of possessing India and looks upon himself as a great colonizer and a great administrator whose mission in life is to rule backward eastern countries in the interest of those countries He lives an isolated life like Anglo Indians of the past and is not very liberal in his views According to Mrs G H Bell his narrow mindedness is the result of his very isolation Mr G Lowes Dickinson compared the Anglo Indian world to an Atlantic liner floating on the Indian World It has water tight compartments The Anglo Indian is cut off from richer minds than his own and does not mix with Indians Hence he lacks the very breadth of mind upon the possession of which he congratulates himself ³ Mrs Barbara Wingfield Stratford similarly writes in *Beryl in India*

The whole white community in India was as a whole hopelessly narrow minded unimaginative and lacking in dignity (p 11)

Mrs Maud Diver who calls Anglo India this lively and apparently unthinking world of British India—a world dominated by official personalities and abbreviations thus characterizes her countrymen in India in *Desmond's Daughter*

What are they after all these Anglo Indians and what spell

¹ pp 87-8

² Locke *The Golden Lotus* pp 305-6

³ Savi *Torchlight* p 17

⁴ A Perrin *East of Suez* p 198

is put upon them by the land of their service, that even their own countrymen deem them almost a race apart? Those that best know them are least ready with a definition and as for the verdict of the travelled observer, one of the breed dismisses them airily as "a little scattered garrison—mute, snobbish, not obviously clever and obviously ill-educated", stewards of great mysteries who "don't and won't understand any race but their own", while another, seeing a few inches deeper, detects under the surface of muteness and officialism the sturdy self-control, the patient and persistent driving force that have made the country what it is to-day' (p 49)

(11) *Discriminately hospitable* The Anglo-Indian of to-day is discriminately hospitable. In times of trouble and need he is prepared to receive under his roof comparative strangers who may have little or nothing in common with him beyond the fact of their being Englishmen. In the early nineteenth century the open-door, indiscriminate hospitality of Anglo-India struck Englishmen as one of their brightest virtues. 'One of the many lessons,' says Mrs Perrin, 'that the great Mother India instils into the hearts of her white foster children is to sympathise with one another's troubles and misfortunes, however trivial or however serious'.¹ However, as time passed, this hospitality began to be less indiscriminate. Mrs Ross Church (Florence Marryat) in *Gips* says that in her time it was a very general complaint in India that the country with regard to its hospitality was not what it used to be. She makes 'old fellows, with the native cloth trousers sticking close to their legs', say that when they were boys and utter strangers they were received by everybody with open arms. This shows that in the old days an Englishman was less common and therefore more welcome than he is now, and that under the rule of John Company the Old Indians 'had a larger quantity of curry and rice wherewith to regale their friends'. According to Mrs Ross Church, in the post-Mutiny India 'unquestioning

¹ *East of Suez*, p 141

entertainment for man and beast is an impracticable virtue. It is uncalled for kindness and impossible in a country which is being daily reinforced by employees from every grade of society. But she does not agree with gentlemen of red and green plaid trousers that it has entirely vanished. Mrs B M Croker in her first novel *Proper Pride* (1882) speaks of the proverbial hospitality of the Anglo-Indian. Kipling in the *Phantom Rickshaw* thinks that Globe trotters who expect entertainment as a right, have even within living memory, blunted this open heartedness but none the less to-day if you belong to the Inner Circle and are neither a Bear nor a Black Sheep all houses are open to you. There are indications that in the India of to day with good hotels springing up in the larger cities and dak bungalows in the remotest districts the virtue of hospitality is not so essential as it necessarily

asks with surprise. Where is the vaunted hospitality of the Anglo Indians?

(iii) *Its monotony* Anglo Indian life is monotonous especially for women. When the novelty of India wears off the period of disillusionment begins. Banished from all interest or discussions in the affairs of India by civilians and soldiers

not young enough to be content with the same round of amusements and too clever to stagnate the monotonous routine of her daily existence begins to prey upon her soul.

Every day was so much like every other day a ride in the morning and an idle empty day in the bungalow with nothing in particular to do but read or sleep a game of golf or a set of tennis till dark and then a long evening at the club (Y Endrikar *Gamblers in Happiness* p 121.)

In many novels we get a glimpse of the trying monotony of the Englishwoman's life in India especially in the hot weather. A penance like walk for health's sake in the early

morning, with the soul gasping for a breath of fresh air, a late breakfast and no luncheon, struggles to sleep or rest in the afternoon, tea, a drive in the stuffy, still evening, an hour passed under the fans at the club, with papers and magazines and languid conversation, followed by dinner in the garden, a short interval spent in gazing at the stars, and an early going to bed to make up for the early rising—these complete the picture of a normal day in Anglo-India. This monotony is sometimes broken by a moonlight picnic or a dance. Life in the cold weather, and in the larger cities and military cantonments, is a little more varied, but in a small station where the dozen or so of Europeans, who know every line of one another's faces by heart, and everything about one another's lives, have to meet at the club daily and listen to petty squabbles and malicious gossip, life is dull.

(iv) *Its snobbery* Several writers speak of the snobbery of Anglo-Indians. Mrs. Ross Church writes in *Grip*,

'Rupee is the name of the highest god they worship, then 'rank' for the women, 'beauty' for the men, after which they have no more religion' (p. 63)

Mr. Alexander Wilson divides the people of this country into three divisions, 'sahibs, snobs, and sinners'.¹ This is an apt classification of Anglo-India. Sahibs may be said to represent gentlemen, sinners are gentlemen who have gone wrong, snobs are not gentlemen but pretend to be so. The worship of rank is the worst feature of Anglo-Indian society. 'The laws of precedence', writes Norah K. Strange, 'which govern European society in India are almost as immutable as those of the Medes and Persians'.² Mr. Edward Thompson writes bitterly of the 'herd ethos' of the Indian Civil Servants and their con-

¹ *The Devil's Cocktail*, p. 321

² *Mistress of Ceremonies*, p. 49. Miss Yvonne Fitzroy in *Courts and Camps in India* writes 'If I were asked what struck me as the chief concern of English social life in India, I should answer "To seek Precedence and ensue it!" Precedence is the focal point of India's social nonsense, convulses the home, and has even, it is rumoured, convulsed the Government' (p. 210).

temptuous treatment of all other classes Mr Shelland Bradley and several other writers ridicule the desire of Englishmen and Englishwomen to have their names on the Government House list

(v) *Its melancholy* In spite of the intoxication of power Anglo India is not altogether happy The English soldier pines for the sights and sounds of London the mother for her children the husband for his wife the toiling official for the opportunities lost the statesman for contact with minds more cultivated than his own and the epicure for the joys of the English table Mr Oaten calls this longing for home and dissatisfaction with the country of their adoption Anglo Indian melancholy In earlier times when the conditions of life in India were much harder, this note of melancholy was still more prominent in Anglo Indian literature than at present Increased amenities of life better pay greater opportunities and facilities for visiting England have somewhat lessened the intensity of home sickness, but not altogether removed it In the fiction of the nineteenth century from Hockley to Kipling we come across it again and again Mr W D Arnold in *Oakfield* and Sir Charles Lyall in verse voiced it with deep and genuine feeling Sir Henry Cunningham expresses it in *The Cæruleans* Masterly who was given to talking in a tone of persiflage becomes at once serious when Lady Miranda refers to Anglo Indian life as delightfully free

Yes he said free as the desert the desolate freedom of the white jackass freedom from the people you care about the things you are interested in the places you love—freedom from everything but what can be tied up in red tape and put in a despatch box—freedom which is free in the same way that the Roman's solitude was peace (p 129)

In *The Madness of Private Ortheris* Kipling has given expression to it in unforgettable words Among modern novelists Mrs Coulson Kernahan says in *The Woman who Understood*

Anglo Indian life is a sacrifice It is a series of uprootals

There either a woman separates from her children or leaves her husband. Whichever it is, it is sacrifice. I often wonder if any gain compensates for the loss' (p. 136)

'John Travers' (Mrs. G. H. Bell) is full of this note in *Sahib-log*. She sadly refers to 'Indian partings and meetings',¹ she misses in India those 'people who are in possession of what they love most',² she sighs for the birth of spring in England, and exclaims, 'How one could weep for the breath and the sound and the sight of it by the waters of Babylon!' (p. 125). She knows that India stole much, destroyed much, but gave nothing,³ and her heart goes out in sympathy for those young wives and mothers whose children are in England, whose husbands are in the plains, and 'whose homes are baked in the cantonments, dismantled and silent, save for the punkhas' creaking, empty, but for the sweating soldier men'.⁴ According to Mr. Duff-Fyfe India is no place for a white man with slender means and no certain and heaven-born position. He loathes the country and everything connected with it.⁵ Sir Francis Younghusband, who was so anxious to 'liven things' for English soldiers in India, says that their life 'without home attractions' is dreary and depressing.⁶ But the most interesting of modern books from this point of view, marked by a deep note of sadness, accentuated by the disquieting conditions of modern political India, is Mr. Edward Thompson's *A Farewell to India*. Mr. Thompson's disappointment is great, as his love for India was great. Alden's departure from India is the departure of a sincere Christian who had loved India, identified himself with her, was bruised and broken in her service, and yet was discarded by her without a word of gratitude or regret.

(vi) *Its conservatism*. Among other characteristics of Anglo-Indian fiction we may notice its conservatism. While Anglo-India is very unconventional in some

¹ *Sahib-log*, p. 14

² *Ibid*, p. 211

³ *The Relentless Gods*, p. 21

⁴ *Ibid*, p. 114

⁵ *Ibid*, p. 210

⁶ *But in Our Lives*, p. 115.

respects it is strangely conservative in others Mrs Savi draws attention to this peculiarity of Anglo Indian life in *The Unattainable* Edwina the heroine finds on her arrival from England that the circle in which she moved was correct to the point of weariness and did things which their grand parents had done for generations they echoed their views despite the advance of time and evolution, they worshipped ceremony as a god treated extremes of fashion as immoral and freedom of speech as a shocking breach of decorum amounting to impropriety, and condemned to perdition all who refused to be hide bound by custom This conservatism and love of ceremony result from their being cut off from the current of ever changing and constantly moving life at home They would begin to stagnate like a pool of water cut off from the main stream but for the constant influx of new thought energy fashions and manners brought by new arrivals Another force that tends to make the Anglo Indians formal and conservative is their fear that sudden changes in thought speech and dress might adversely affect their prestige English society in most of the stations of Anglo India is limited to a small number which on account of official transfers and other changes is generally in a state of flux It may be supposed therefore that in India an Englishman is free to do what he likes as no Mrs Grundy controls his conduct But considerations of prestige arising out of his position as a member of the ruling caste act as powerful brakes on the Anglo Indian young or old The English in India lead a glass house existence The minutest details of their lives are known to their servants These latter talk in the bazaars, and thence the news magnified distorted, or exaggerated by imagination or misunderstanding, may reach the remotest corners of India affording amusement to the elders of a village smoking their hookahs under the peepul tree the women at the well and even street urchins engaged in their pastimes and frolics The fear of losing prestige explains

many curious practices of Anglo-India. In some clubs all the windows and doors are closed so that the servants may not see the sahibs dancing. Mrs. Bell does not approve of short skirts and short sleeves, because it 'horrifies the Indian' ¹ Norah K. Strange says, in *Mistress of Ceremonies*, 'what is ordinary and quite harmless in England takes a very different complexion in Eastern eyes'.

'In England it is no body's but your husband's business if you choose to dress up like a harlequin and prance about like an inebriated negro, but in India it's every decent thinking person's business to see that his race doesn't lose prestige in the eyes of a still subject people, who are as ready to magnify flaws as they are to forget past benefits' (pp 118-19)

Mr Edward Thompson says in *Night Falls on Siva's Hill*, that it is not often that Englishmen quarrel in India in the presence of native servants ² Considerations of prestige are chiefly responsible for the almost complete exclusion of Indians from English clubs. Such clubs have done more to 'breed ill-will than any other dozen institutions' ³ For political reasons some clubs have had to admit Indians of position, but they have done so with a bad grace. Mr Endrikar refers to an interesting situation that arose in a club which had to admit Indians, because the Governor threatened to resign his membership otherwise. The Indian members were invited to take part in all the events, but when it came to dancing, 'half the ladies of the station were up in arms at the mere suggestion of dancing with Indians' ⁴ In the past it was tacitly understood that none of these Indians would wish to be present at the club dances. But when Ratnaswami casually said that accompanied by a friend he intended to attend the club dance, the Mowlpure Club was taken aback. The exclusiveness of the older clubs is shown by the statement that while they welcomed all Englishmen, 'prince and philosopher—

¹ *In the Long Run*, p 11

³ Talbot Mundy, *Om*

² p 20

⁴ *Gamblers in Happiness*, p 172

sweeper and beggarman' ¹ no Indian, even if he were a nawab or maharajah was eligible for membership Mr Talbot Mundy writes in *Om* that the members of the Delhi Club were proud of the fact that no Indian not even a Maharajah has ever set foot over its threshold

Anglo India has several unwritten laws and traditions which may

its serious c

the marriage

approve of the marriage of an official at the commencement of his career and condemns it as an unpardonable piece of stupidity ² Military Anglo India is still more strict in this respect Its rule is A lieutenant can't marry A captain mustn't A major may if he likes A colonel ought ³ The tragedy of a wasted life recorded in Mr Thompson's *Night Falls on Sivas Hill* is the result of independence shown by one of the Mianis in matrimonial matters Anglo India condemns mixed marriages in no uncertain terms An Englishman who marries an Indian girl is pitied and Anglo India does all it can to prevent such a *mésalliance* A romantic English girl who commits the folly of marrying an Indian gentleman is ostracized and regarded as dead by Anglo-India

(vii) *Its calling hour* The calling hour of Anglo India has surprised all newcomers and makes Anglo Indian society resemble Cranfordians in this respect The two hottest hours of the day are selected for paying calls Sir Henry Cunningham considers this custom idiotic He wonders how it arose and that no one has found courage or strength enough to break a custom 'so detrimental to the health and comfort of mankind

Like Chinese ladies feet the high heels on which fashionable Europe at present does penance suttee of Hindu widows and infanticide among the Rajput nobles it is merely a curious instance that there is nothing so foolish and so disagreeable

¹ G B Newcomen *Blue Moons* p 110 ² A Perrin *East of Suez* p 287

³ F E Penny *A Question of Love* p 39

that human beings will not do or endure if it only becomes the fashion' (*Chronicles of Dostypore*, p 47)

Another peculiar custom is that it is the new comer who calls first, without waiting to be called on, the call is returned and the new comer is asked out or not, as people see fit. If no such invitation is received the matter ends there.¹ The method of paying calls is simple. You drive to the first house on your list. If the lady is not receiving, the servant will bring a box with the inscription 'Not at Home'. You simply drop your card and drive on to the next house on the list. If the lady is receiving, the servant brings the lady's salaams and you have to go in for a few minutes. No call is expected to last for more than five minutes. 'The funniest part', writes 'O Douglas' in *Olivia in England* (1913), 'of it is that one may have hundreds of people on one's visiting list and not know half of them by sight, because of the convenient system of the not-at-home box'.² The etiquette of Anglo-India demands that you should leave as soon as another visitor arrives.

(viii) *Its indifference to religion* Meadows Taylor in *The Story of My Life* refers to the indifference of his contemporaries to religion. Apart from missionaries, the average Englishman in India to-day calls himself a Christian more for political than other reasons. Church attendance on Sundays is necessary more to show the solidarity of Englishmen in India than to satisfy their spiritual needs. Most of them attend church as they attend parades, that is, under orders. Here is a characteristic passage from Mr Y Endrikar's *Gamblers in Happiness*, typical of Anglo-India's attitude towards religion.

'I go on principle in India to show that I am not ashamed of my religion. I would like to have an order issued that every European officer should attend church every Sunday, if he is in headquarters. In England I confess I take a holiday' (p 155)

¹ Savi, *Sackcloth and Ashes*

² p 98

Sir Francis Younghusband says in *But in Our Lives* that living in India with Hindus and Mohammedans had made him realize that Christianity had never sunk into the very marrow of the bone of an Englishman like Islam and Hinduism into the Indian. Some Anglo Indians are positively hostile to Christian Churches in India. Miss Bishop says in *Wine of Sorrow* that the Government viewed Christianity as a most dangerous innovation and was loath to expose the Hindu to its contagion. He adds with sorrow that more than one Christian officer 'bowed down to wood and stones to please a native people whom he feared'.¹ Mr L. Beresford believes that if English rule in India is ever finally laid in its coffin, the Church by the tactlessness of its representatives will have assisted to nail down the lid.

(ix) *Its social constitution* In order to understand Anglo Indian life it is necessary to understand its peculiar constitution. In Anglo India most of the women are young and married.² The very young girl and the very old lady are absent from it. Young children have to be sent to England to be educated there and old ladies accompany their husbands after their retirement. This leaves Anglo India with girls and wives. Secondly these ladies have nothing serious to do. They have no domestic responsibilities and occupations. They have so many servants that there is little they need do themselves. If any enthusiastic mistress of the house desires to do things for herself she soon finds that it is useless. Cœrulean life is long and the art of Cœrulean house keeping is

¹ p. 22

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seldom to be encountered in India they have done their time gone home—or to their graves. Sometimes they stay to live out their last years in some more or less salubrious region but such settlers are dying out and with easier transit home are not replaced for though living may be less expensive and cheap luxuries attractive there is always the loss of prestige and the desire to end their days in England (p. 76)

extremely short', says Camilla ¹ Servants are many, living is cheap, the kitchen is unattractive and unhygienic, and the only house-keeping problem of the mem-sahib in India is to keep accounts of dusters or charcoal. Just to pass time, or for the sake of a new sensation, or a little excitement, these women begin to 'play at being in love' ² A third feature of Anglo-Indian life is that its men folk are either very busy or very idle. The Assistant Magistrate, the Civil Surgeon, the Engineer, and the Superintendent of Police are examples of busy people. The young unmarried subaltern, on the other hand, has very little to do. Fourthly, the climate of India separates the toiling husband from the wife, who spends the greater part of the year at one of the hill stations and comes down to the plains only in the cold weather. When we consider in addition the influence of climate and the scarcity of English females in India, the fact that for help and protection in time of trouble and need Englishwomen have to depend upon Englishmen in general, that there is no lack of bachelors making merry away from the discipline of their regiments, and of married men whose wives are in England, and finally that life at hill stations with its round of amusements, dances, dinners, picnics, and balls is gay throughout the year,³ is it surprising that a society so

¹ 'Housekeeping in the East is a comparatively easy affair, it is accomplished in the early morning, and consists chiefly of "orders"'. The butler and the cook swagger back to the kitchen full of authority. They issue mandates under cover of "Missus's orders", the missus being innocent of nine-tenths of them. The result is admirable, a trouble-saving arrangement which should turn the whole body of housewives in England green with envy' (*Living Dangerously*, p. 74)

² Mrs. Ross Church enumerates the types of females who are to be found on the hills, and who make the hills dangerous to an idle man. 'There are the wives who *can't* live with their husbands in the plains, and grass-widows—they are (without any reference to the amount of their charms) the most dangerous that the idle man could encounter. Then there are young ladies whose parents are not able, or willing, to send them to England just yet, but who are too old to live with safety in the heat of Madras. And lastly there are mothers themselves, with their troop of little ones' (p. 102)

³ Thus writes Mrs. Margaret Mordecai about the gaiety of Anglo-

peculiarly constituted should become a Garden of Eden where the Devil enters to tempt Eve¹ or that tragedies or comedies of love and marriage should be the most prominent feature of the life of Anglo India and of Anglo Indian fiction whose pages are so full of flirtations and frivolities scandals and gossip as to exclude almost every thing else² Sir Henry Cunningham in his inimitable manner traces the growth of a woman like Mrs Vereker a type of character which Indian life brings into especial prominence and develops into fuller perfection than is to be found in less artificial communities He says

She had come to India while still almost a child and in a few months long before thought or feeling had approached maturity had found herself the belle of a station and presently a bride These circumstances separated her frequently from her husband and she learnt to bear separation heroically The sweet incense of flattery was for ever rising and she learnt to love it better every day Any number of men were for ever ready to throw themselves at her feet and proclaim her adorable and she came to feel it right that they should do so She found that she could conjure with her eyes and mouth and exercise a little despotism by simply using them as Nature told her (*Chronicles of Dootypore* pp 80-1)

Sir Henry Cunningham wrote in the last quarter of the nineteenth century To show that Anglo Indian life has not changed in its essential elements since then we quote the following from *The Jungle Girl* by Mr G Casserly whose book was published only a few years ago

Her husband of course was as blind as most husbands seem

to be in the Anglo-Indian society. For in that land of the Household of Three, the Eternal Triangle, it is almost a recognised principle that every married woman who is at all attractive is entitled to have one particular bachelor always in close attendance on her, to be constantly at her beck and call, to ride with her, to drive her every afternoon to tennis or golf or watch polo, then on to the club and sit with her there. His duty, a pleasant one, no doubt, is to cheer up her otherwise solitary dinner in her bungalow, on the nights when her neglectful husband is dining out *en garçon*. No Cavaliere Servente of Old Italy ever had so dizzy a time as the Tame Cat of India of to-day' (p. 64)

Mrs Wingfield-Stratford, writing in 1921, thus describes Anglo-Indian life

'Once or twice it struck her that the lives of most of the women she met were singularly aimless ones. She was also surprised sometimes at the matter-of-fact way in which somebody's husband and somebody else's wife almost invariably paired off together. Every lady in the station, except herself, seemed to have what Mrs. Tukeson knew as a "Boy", and were surprisingly frank about it' (p. 87)

The young flirt, after a life of dalliance, wit, flattery, and strife, generally develops into the scandal-mongering wicked lady of the station, presiding over the club, and finding her chief business in life in pulling neighbours to pieces or in chaperoning a young niece.¹ She discusses over her tea-cup the sins of her friends and acquaintances, criticizes other women's gowns, calculates how much each man earns, and estimates the allowance he makes to his wife.² Judging Anglo-Indian life from its pursuits, amusements, and clubs, a new comer is likely 'to look with horror and loathing upon an existence which appeared to sap all that was best and sweetest out of life, and transformed it into a hideous, grasping, money-making, place-seeking travesty'.³

(x) *Religion of work*. But it would be a mistake to

¹ L. Beresford, *The Second Rising*, p. 71.

² A. Wilson, *The Devil's Cocktail*, p. 141

³ *Ibid*, p. 141

think that the flirt or the gossip represents the whole of Anglo India. The life depicted in most Anglo Indian novels is of a trivial character¹. But the men who govern India possess many sterling virtues or they would have lost India long ago. Devotion to duty or doing one's job, as Mr Thompson puts it is the most important of their virtues. It is well illustrated in several novels though never so clearly or prominently as the life of gaiety and amusements. In *The Caruleans* Camilla found that real India was something very different from that of magazine articles. She found Anglo Indians hard at work.

The nobility of their task seemed to throw a sort of moral grandeur over their lives that might otherwise have been commonplace and even ignoble in their dullness. India is a hard taskmaster. She gives men plenty of opportunities of proving their worth². Novel after novel mentions (incidentally) the whole hearted devotion of Englishmen to their work. Sylvester of *The Price of Empire* and Delahey of the *Shadow of Abdul* resemble Henry Lawrence and remind one of the ancient Spartans and Romans. Even Sir Henry Cunningham who has so mercilessly exposed the faults of Anglo Indian society acknowledges that Hannibal's soldiers did not have to work so hard as the English officials at Elysium. This devotion to work is a new religion to the Englishman in India. It grips him as nothing else does³. It is a remarkable and pleasing

John Travers (Mrs G. H. Bell) twice comments on the Anglo Indian novel in her *Hot Water*. I can't see what such a novel could present

speaks of the feeble imbecility of Anglo Indian novels in general. (All Simla Gossip and valiant warriors and raids and proposals at picnics.) (p. 127)

¹ p. 206
² K. M. Edge *The Shuttles of the Loom* p. 201

characteristic of Anglo-Indian novelists that while they delight in drawing attention to the follies and imperfections of Anglo-Indians they do not over-emphasize the praiseworthy traits of their character. In the distant outposts of the frontier, in jungles and lonely mofussil stations often far removed from men of their own race, these civilians and soldiers have done their duty for duty's sake. Mrs. Maud Diver is untiring in her admiration for the Spartan ideals of duty and service that distinguish the lives of her countrymen in India. Another book which embodies this ideal of silent service and worship of work is *But in Our Lives* by Sir Francis Younghusband. One finds a subdued echo of the same in Mr. Edward Thompson's two books, *An Indian Day* and *A Farewell to India*. Hamar, Findlay, and Alden are his heroes, they suffer but do their jobs.

(xi) *Anglo-Indian women misrepresented* Anglo-Indian novelists, both men and women, have not done justice to the women of Anglo-India. Even Mr. Thompson is hard on them, and goes so far as to suggest that much of the poisoning of the world's thinking comes from the idleness and ease of sheltered women, especially young women. Hilda wonders if there is any country where it is so useless and ineffectual to be an Englishwoman as India.¹ This is the feeling of many Englishwomen who are disgusted with the commonplace lives of their sisters in India. Some women writers like Mrs. Maud Diver, Mrs. Alice Perrin, and Mrs. G. H. Bell have attempted to show that the life of Englishwomen in India is not so frivolous as it appears on the surface, and that they also have played their part silently but heroically in making the British Empire what it is.² However, it is not Anglo-Indian

the "compulsory games" of a public school. It is part of the "white man's burden." He plays as he works, with a sense of responsibility. He is bored, but boredom is a duty, and there is nothing else to do' (p. 16)

¹ *An Indian Day*, p. 204

² In the past, the race prejudice of the English Tommy and Englishwoman widened the gap between England and India. Now some Englishwomen

fiction that gives one the idea of the real contribution of the women of England to the greatness of England. It was left to a poet Mr George Essex Evans to appraise the glorious part played by the women of the West in the expansion of England. For love they faced the wilderness left the 'vine wreathed cottage' for the slab built zinc roofed homestead or huts on new selections, leaving the pleasures of the city, and the friends they cherished best

The red sun robs their beauty and in weariness and pain
The slow years steal the nameless grace that never comes again
And there are hours men cannot soothe and words men can
not say—

The nearest woman's face may be a hundred miles away

For them no trumpet sounds the call no poet plies his arts—
They only hear the beating of their gallant loving hearts
But they have sung with silent lives the song all songs above—
The holiness of sacrifice the dignity of love

These women of the West like some flower transplanted to bloom beneath alien skies, make efforts to adapt themselves to their changed environments and it is no wonder that they wither away. The gaiety of a few seasons does not compensate for the long years of a dreary existence that lie ahead and if to a new comer India appears a land of never ending amusements and pleasures the glamour soon wears off and even the most frivolous woman is forced to realize the difficulties and responsibilities of her position. Even Mrs Savi whose picture of Anglo India is not flattering, says in one of her novels

What a lot of women are unassuming heroines in private life. One has only to come to the East to discover the stuff there is in us (*A Prince of Lovers* p 125)

Mrs Perrin writes, in *The Happy Hunting-Ground*.

'Generally speaking, the conditions of Indian existence may be said to foster the finest feminine qualities of the English-woman, though in some lamentable cases the life may develop the very worst—and then it is the individual, not India, that is to blame' (p 112)

Sir Francis Younghusband divides Englishwomen in India into three classes—those who, losing all womanly grace, become mere copies of men, those who 'live a hot-house, scented life, and wither and crinkle if a breath of fresh air enters their room', and finally those whom Sir Francis calls 'the glory of our race',

'who have been brought up in rain and sunshine, and have been accustomed to mix with men and women of every rank in life, and to live with animals, and who yet retain every womanly charm . They are no mere drawing-room orchids they have the charm and fragrance of the wild rose'¹

Anglo-Indian novels have delineated the first two types but generally ignored the third. We should not forget also, that many English wives who are represented as going wrong in India will go wrong anywhere, and that often their foolishness is interpreted as sin by jealous husbands and scandal-mongers. There are few novels in Anglo-Indian fiction more poignant in their pathos than Mrs Perrin's *The Woman in the Bazaar*, showing how the tragedies of Anglo-Indian married life might be averted if the husbands had a little more understanding of the feelings and difficulties of their wives in India, and could learn to look upon their mistakes a little more charitably. If they remembered the prayer of Rafella,

Other refuge have I none,
Hangs my helpless soul on Thee,
Leave, ah! leave me not alone,
Still support and comfort me,

many an English home in India might be happier than it is.

CHAPTER II

MEADOWS TAYLOR AND OTHER PREDECESSORS OF KIPLING

8 *Beginnings of Anglo Indian fiction*

INDIA has fascinated Europe since time immemorial. From very early times she has been looked upon as a land of gold and jewels and of magic and marvels. For many romancers in the Middle Ages India was a country for the exercise of riotous imagination. Before Vasco da Gama discovered the Cape route to India European knowledge of India was derived from scattered references in the classics or the wild imaginings of the fabulist. The Elizabethan travellers not only described the marvels of India but also drew attention to the great profit that was to be made with the commodities of this country.¹ In *Tamburlaine* Marlowe gave expression to that glamour with which the tales of the travellers had invested the East. Cosroe is pained and resolves into tears because

Men from the farthest equinoctial line
Have swarmed in troops into the Eastern India
Lading their ships with gold and precious stones
And made their sports from all our provinces
(*Tamburlaine* I 1)

Tamburlaine is not prepared to sell the meanest soldier in his train for All the gold in India's wealthy arms. Shakespeare describes the Field of the Cloth of Gold in the following terms

and tomorrow they
Made Britain India every man that stood
Show'd like a mine (Henry VIII I 1)

In the seventeenth century though India was still clothed in the glory of distance and was a grand poetical dream

she began to lose some of her romance. Sir Thomas Browne speaks of the disadvantages of investment in the East India Company Evelyn gives a glimpse of the 'nabob' of the next century in the pompous East India merchant of his time; so does Dryden in the character of Sir Martin Marall But it was not till the eighteenth century—till after the victories of Clive—that England began to see something of real India, and the foundations of Anglo-Indian fiction were laid

The magnificence and wealth of the Anglo-Indians, their eccentricities and vulgarities, first attracted the attention of the public and writers in England in 1772, the first year of Hastings's Governor-Generalship, when Foote produced *The Nabob*, a play picturing the discomfiture of Sir Matthew Mite, a returned Anglo-Indian In 1773 there appeared a satirical poem, *The Nabob, or Asiatic Plunderers* In 1780 was published *Intrigues of a Nabob*, by N F Thompson¹ About 1785 Mackenzie satirized the nabobs in the person of Mrs Mushroom In the same year there appeared a book in four volumes entitled *Anna, or Memoirs of a Welsh Heiress, Interspersed with Anecdotes of a Nabob*

The Disinterested Nabob, a Novel, is mentioned by Mr R Sencourt,² and may be regarded as the first Anglo-Indian novel so far known 1789 saw the publication of *Hartly House*, which, though described as a novel, is 'the first journal written by a woman for her friends in England'³ Sophia Goldborne, an empty-headed English girl, writes an account of her life of magnificence in India to Arabella, whom she pities on account of her humble duties and modest pleasures Calcutta women are shown as spending four or five thousand pounds over their shopping in a morning For several years thereafter we have no record of any novel dealing with India In 1811, Miss Sydney Owenson, later Lady Morgan, published *The Missionary*,

¹ *Lounger*, No 17

³ *Ibid*°, p 217

² *India in English Literature*, p 210

an Indian tale in three volumes. She is the author of *English Homes in India* (1828), which depicts the life of Anglo-Indians.

9 W B Hockley

More important than Miss Owenson is the name of W B Hockley of the Bombay Civil Service who had by 1828 published three interesting books of fiction all dealing with Hindu life *Pandurang Hari or Memoirs of a Hindoo* (1826) *Tales of the Zenana* (1827) and *The English in India* (1828). Hockley's reputation chiefly rests on *Pandurang Hari*. It purports to be a free translation of an Indian document placed in the author's hand by a Hindu of the Deccan. *Pandurang Hari* is the story of a young adventurer of noble birth told in the first person. Its importance is not due to its art, which is crude but to the fact that it served as a model for Meadows Taylor's more famous book *The Confessions of a Thug*.

The plot of *Pandurang Hari* is simple. Pandurang Hari (later Prince Jeoba) is found as a deserted orphan by a Mahratta of some consequence and taken care of by him. He learns his first lessons in treachery and corruption there and narrowly misses being hanged. He next serves in the army of Juswant Rao Holkar who was fighting Scindiah. The author incidentally gives an interesting description of Mahratta forces.

Saddles were always slipping off for want of girths strings fastened to any old pieces of iron by way of bits supplied bridles old turbans served for martingales and tent ropes for cruppers. A most villanous medley of every clumsy shift under the sun was seen on all hands. The infantry were just as wretchedly accoutred as the cavalry everything was wanting and nothing regular. (p. 43)

After the death of his patron and the defeat of Holkar he becomes Gossein at the suggestion of an old impostor Gabbage Gousala who is no other than his treacherous uncle and is robbed of all he possessed. He then serves

as a peon in Bombay, but being implicated in a conspiracy to murder the Topee-Walla treasurer is, by way of punishment, ferried across the water to the Mahratta country. In Bombay Nusroo, a bullock-driver, befriends him. Nusroo's conception of the East India Company is amusing.

'He said that according to some accounts he had heard the Company was an old Englishwoman, aunt to the King of the Topee-Wallas, and that she had got so much money as might buy the whole world were she not over-anxious to have our country first' (p. 60)

Pandurang's life, in short, is a series of unfortunate adventures. Very often his plans are upset by his uncle, who did not know that Pandurang was his nephew. More than once he loses his liberty, more than once his life is in danger, but in the end he successfully overcomes all obstacles. He manages to win the hand of Sagoonah, finds his long-lost father, and is recognized as the heir to the Musnud of Sattarah.

Pandurang Hari is a poor work of art. Its plot is rambling, the characters are ill-defined, and the series of dramatic coincidences irritating. Yet it is a remarkably faithful sketch of Mahratta life at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The position of the Gosseins, the enormous influence they wielded during the reign of Bajee Rao, their criminal activities, the description of the robbers' cave, the life and administration of cities like Poona and Sattarah, the position of the English, the political condition of the Deccan, the rivalry of Scindiah and Holkar, the mode of travelling and the dangers of travel on account of Pindarees, thugs, and robbers, are all well and faithfully described.

Hockley's *Tales of the Zenana, or A Nawab's Leisure Hours* is in some respects a better book than *Pandurang Hari*. It is a collection of witty tales which the author had heard from his servants. They are worked up in the style of the *Arabian Nights*.

10 *Scott's The Surgeon's Daughter*

Contemporaneous with the publication of Hockley's *Tales of the Zenana* Sir Walter Scott, one of the greatest masters of romantic fiction published his romance *The Surgeon's Daughter*. In comparison with Scott's other well known novels it is no better than a cheap melodrama rambling and ill-constructed. But *The Surgeon's Daughter* still deserves close study. It shows how Scott's imagination was fired by India, the true place for a Scot to thrive in. In the preface to the book he tells us why he was attracted by India. In India he could find as much shooting and stabbing as ever took place in the wilds of the Highlands; there he could find rogues, that gallant caste of adventurers who laid down their consciences at the Cape of Good Hope as they went to India and forgot to take them up again when they returned. India also was the land of great exploits where the most wonderful deeds were done by the least possible means, that perhaps the annals of the world can afford.¹ He had read and enjoyed Orme's *History of Military Transactions of the British Nation in*

warlike Rajpoot the haughty Moslemah the savage and vindictive Malay gripped him and though he had never been to India and knew nothing at all about Indians, he undertook to write this romance of India at the suggestion of some of his friends and relations who had seen India.

Like the imitative operatives of Paisley he says, I have composed in
Thibet wool
MacEries or
moor or dived into an Indian jungle had the goodness to supply me with.²

The plot of this story is melodramatic. Menie Gray, the beautiful daughter of a Scotch surgeon, is decoyed to India by her treacherous lover, Richard Middlemass, who, in the hope of being made a governor, intends to sell her to Tippoo Sultan, or, in the words of the Swiss adventuress Madame Montieville, to present her to him 'as a lily from Frangistan to plant within the recesses of the secret garden of his pleasures'. A devoted lover rescues her. The main characters are of the usual type with Scott. Richard Middlemass is all wickedness, as Adam Hartley is all faithfulness. Miss Gray belongs to the usual class of Scott's heroines—a pink and white maiden without judgement. Haider Ali is represented as just by perhaps political considerations, but by temperament 'his blood is as unruly as ever beat under a black skin'. 'Hakim,' he says, addressing the faithful Hartley, 'thou shalt return with the Feringi woman, and with gold to compensate her injuries—Do thou say to thy nation, Hyder Ali acts justly.'

Apart from plot and characterization the 'atmosphere' of the story deserves attention. In Hillary, Scott paints a type of Indian swaggerer whom he knew well. He was aware of the unscrupulousness of the Company and its servants. The scandals connected with recruitment of servants for the Company and 'the blazing promises by which India had mesmerized the brains of young Britishers'¹ find a vivid portraiture in this novel. There are references to Englishmen smoking the hookah, to duels and to the behaviour of 'the mets and quincepigs' on an Indiaman who made the voyage of English girls coming to India very uncomfortable by their habit of rude staring. Scott is at his best in describing the splendour of Indian scenery, the strange terror and fascination of our jungles and the blaze of the princely procession as it passed through the bazaars of Seringapatam. The meeting of Prince Tippoo with the Begum is described with Scott's usual vigour and eye for picturesque details.²

¹ R. Sencourt, p. 323

² *The Surgeon's Daughter*, ch. xlv

II *Dickens and India*

Unlike Scott Dickens was never attracted by India. He was pre-eminently a novelist of London and was too much of an Englishman to think of India. But even then India had become so important in the nineteenth century that it could not be altogether ignored. In making Jonas Chuzzlewit the secretary of the Anglo-Bengali Disinterested Loan Company, Dickens like Thackeray satirizes the formation of bogus companies by means of which many Jonas Chuzzlewits exploited the ignorant. This company was a bogus concern engineered by Tigg Montague and David Crimble with a paid capital of a two and as many noughts after it as the printer can get in a line. It was typical of many fraudulent companies which robbed the public before the introduction of protective legislation. In *Dombey and Son* there is a reference to the long distance between England and India. Little Paul asks his sister Florence

Floy where s India where that boy s friends live
Oh it s a long long distance off
Weeks off asked Paul

Yes dear Many weeks journey night and day (ch viii)

Hearing this Paul feels that if Florence went to India he would die. In *Little Dorrit* Dickens refers to India as a place where governesses like Miss Wade hoped to have a good time. Miss Wade tells us that her mistress delighted to expatiate on the style in which we were to live in India and on the establishment we should keep and the company we should entertain when the nephew of the family rose to an important position in India. In *David Copperfield* we learn that the young husband of Betsey Trotwood went to India and there rode an elephant along with a baboon which in the opinion of David Copperfield was a mistake for a baboo or a begum. Jack Malden the needy and idle cousin of Mrs Strong who went to India is looked upon by young David as a modern Sindbad.

He is pictured as the bosom friend of all the Rajahs in the East, sitting under canopies, smoking curly golden pipes a mile long.

12 *Thackeray and India*

Thackeray was born in Calcutta and had Anglo-Indian blood in his veins. He remembered the land of his birth and, as is well known, introduced it in his novels. But he has not written any real novel of India, with the exception of a burlesque entitled *Some passages in the Life of Major Gahagan*, which is now known as *The Tremendous Adventures of Major Gahagan* (1838). Major Goliath Gahagan,¹ who thinks himself a man of supernatural beauty and extraordinary bravery, relates, quite in the style of the Baron Munchausen, his celebrated Indian adventures which carried his fame even to the ears of Napoleon. Most of the Indian characters in the book are either cruel and cowardly or treacherous. Dowsunt Row Scindiah is represented as a cruel and barbarous chieftain, Zubbeidas Khan is 'a ruthless Afghan soldier' who put out the eyes of Shah Allum, Ghorum Sang is a treacherous servant of Major Gahagan; and all Indian ladies are horribly ugly and faithless. The Major is a burlesque of those desperate adventurers who, finding England too hot for them, sought the golden sands of the East to repair their fortunes. They were often the refuse of English respectability. With the exception of a reference to *Bengal Hurkarn*, a

¹ In an article, 'The Real Major Gahagan' (*Calcutta Review*, 1891, p. 20 et seq.), it is pointed out, that William Linneus Gardner, a man who 'did his work with calmness and reticence, waiting patiently for his opportunities, and content to live and die undecorated', was the original of Major Gahagan, who engraved his honours on his visiting cards and informed the public of his conversations with Royalty and his feats in love and war. 'Like his fictitious representative, our hero was a tall and brave wielder of the sabre, who raised and commanded a body of Irregular "Horse"'. Like Gahagan, he bearded the truculent Holkar in his durbar-tent, and won the love of a dusky princess of Ind.' But with these circumstances the resemblance ends, for while Thackeray's hero was a braggart and a swaggarter, our own Anglo-Indian Major was a 'modest, retiring gentleman, with an almost morbid hatred of self-assertion'.

newspaper there is not much local colour. The siege of Futtyghur where the Major performs prodigies of valour is introduced only to illustrate the supernormal prowess of that gallant officer. The nature of a burlesque requires some amount of exaggeration but Thackeray who has given to English literature its greatest burlesque in *Rebecca and Ronena* here shocks the reader by the very grotesqueness of his characters and situations.

In his famous English novels *Vanity Fair* *The New comes* and *Pendennis* Thackeray has created a few Anglo Indian characters who even to this day remain as models for Anglo Indian writers to copy. Joseph Sedley the fat and vain Collector of Boggley Wollah—a fine lonely, marshy jungly district famous for snipe shooting and where not unfrequently you may flush a tiger—is a skit on Indian civil servants of the days of Barwell and Holwell. Though Sedley ran away from Brussels while the battle of Waterloo was raging he boasts of his bravery on his return to India and is dubbed Waterloo Sedley. Colonel Jack Altamont a man with very black hair and whiskers with twinkling eyelashes and a thousand wrinkles in his red coloured face is a representative of the unscrupulous adventurers of the early days of the East India Company. He is an escaped convict who had been sentenced to transportation for forging his father in law's name. He pretends to be a Colonel in the service of the Nawab of Lucknow and lives partly on his gains at the gaming table and partly on money which he obtains by blackmail. James Binnie is a sympathetic portrait of an Indian civil servant who retires after twenty two years service. He is unlike the nabob of books and tradition who Thackeray tells us is no longer to be found.

He is neither as wealthy nor as wicked as the jaundiced monster of romances and comedies who purchases the estates of broken down English gentlemen with rupees tortured out of bleeding rajahs who smokes a hookah in public and in private carries about a guilty conscience diamonds of untold

value, and a diseased liver, who has a vulgar wife, with a retinue of black servants whom she maltreats, and a gentle son and daughter with good impulses and an imperfect education, desirous to amend their own and their parents' lives' (*The Newcomes*, ch. viii)

The only Indian character in Thackeray's novels who deserves mention is Rummun Loll. He is a rich merchant of low origin and doubtful honesty. In England he passes as His Excellency Rummun Loll, otherwise his Highness Rummun Loll, the chief proprietor of the Diamond Mines at Golconda, with a claim of three millions and a half upon the East India Company. He smokes his hookah and to please him many English gentlemen make themselves sick by pulling at it. Doctor McGuffog, Thackeray humorously notes, had puffed his hookah 'in the hope of converting His Highness', till he was as 'black in the face as the interesting Indian'. Rummun Loll keeps betel leaves in a silver box. He is lionized by Englishmen and Englishwomen who, crowding round him and 'snuggling' up to his India-rubber face, listen to him 'as eagerly as Desdemona listened to Othello'. Colonel Newcome, the beau idéal of a gentleman, cannot conceal his contempt for the so-called prince and treats him with scant courtesy. To him, he is 'a fellow who wouldn't sit down in an officer's presence' in India, though later on the gallant Colonel is prepared to become a Director of the Bundelcund Bank, and invest therein the greater part of his fortune.

These portraits are drawn by Thackeray in the exuberance of his creative power. They are in most cases mere caricatures, but they show what he could have done for India had he, like Kipling, returned to the land of his birth in his youth. Thackeray left India as a child, and whatever he learnt later about India was from his relations or from books. His genius uses this derived knowledge for purposes of art, but second-hand information cannot take the place of real experience, particularly in dealing with an Eastern country like India.

A vivid picture of India about the beginning of the eighteenth century can be formed even from scattered passages in *The Newcomes* and *Vanity Fair*. The voyage from India to England which took eight months when Clive Newcome's mother went to Bengal took only four months and eleven days when Clive Newcome returned to England.¹ Colonel Newcome is loved by his poor relations for his generosity and his presents which comprise shawls ivory chessmen scented sandalwood work-boxes and kincob scarfs. He is very rich and has fifty servants. But he himself lives as frugally as a Hindoo. Thackeray is familiar with an Indian Brahmin's house and recollects the punkahs and the purdahs and tattys and the pretty brown maidens with great eyes and great nose rings and painted foreheads and slim waists cased in cashmere shawls kincob scarfs curly slippers gilt trousers precious anklets and bangles,² and reveals the mystery of Eastern existence (as understood by him) in the early part of the nineteenth century. He has not only tried to catch the magic of eastern existence but he is fully conscious of the pathos that lies below the story of the British conquest of India. Besides the splendour and conquest the wealth and glory the crowned ambition the conquered danger that fill official history, should not asks Thackeray, one remember the tears too?³

Besides the lives of myriads of British men conquering on a hundred fields from Plassy to Meeanee and bathing them *cruore nostro* think of the women and the tribute which they perforce must pay to those victorious achievements. Scarce a soldier goes to yonder shores but leaves a home and grief in it behind him. The lords of the subject province find wives there but their children cannot live on the soil. The parents bring their children to the shore and part from them. The family must be broken up. Keep the flowers of your home beyond a certain time and the sickening buds wither and die. In America it is from the breast of a poor slave that a child

¹ *The Newcomes* ch. iii

² *Ibid* ch. v

³ *Ibid* ch. xxviii

value, and a diseased liver; who has a vulgar wife, with a retinue of black servants whom she maltreats, and a gentle son and daughter with good impulses and an imperfect education, desirous to amend their own and their parents' lives' (*The Newcomes*, ch. viii)

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¹ *The Newcomes* ch. iii

Ibid ch. v

² *Ibid* ch. xxviii

is taken, in India it is from the wife, and from under the palace, of a splendid proconsul' (*The Newcomes*, ch v)

In passages like the following Thackeray also gives us a glimpse of the humorous side of Anglo-Indian life. He knows that there is no part of the world where ladies are more fascinating than in British India.

'Perhaps the warmth of the sun kindles flames in the hearts of both sexes which would probably beat quite coolly in their native air, else why should Miss Brown be engaged ten days after landing at Calcutta? or why should Miss Smith have half a dozen proposals before she has been a week at the Station. And it is not only bachelors on whom the young ladies confer their affections, they will take widowers without any difficulty' (*The Newcomes*, ch v)

In *Vanity Fair* we are told that Glorvina had flirted all the way to Madras with the captain and chief mate of the *Ramchunder* East Indiaman and, undismayed by forty or fifty previous defeats, she laid siege to the heart of Major Dobbin. 'She sang Irish melodies at him unceasingly.' She asked him frequently and pathetically, 'Will ye come to the bower?' Of course Dobbin did not go to the bower, but 'he went on riding with her and copying music and playing at chess with her submissively' 'For', adds Thackeray, 'it is with these simple amusements that some officers in India are accustomed to while away their leisure moments, while others of a less domestic turn hunt hogs, and shoot snipes, or gamble and smoke cheroots, and betake themselves to brandy-and-water.'

13. *Meadows Taylor*

Thackeray is not an Anglo-Indian novelist of any outstanding merit. The most important writer of the pre-Kipling period in the history of Anglo-Indian fiction is undoubtedly Colonel Meadows Taylor. Himself a romantic figure, he had ample opportunities of coming into close contact with native life and manners at the impressionable age of fifteen. He was a diligent student of the Persian,

Mahrattī and Hindustanī languages Hindustanī he could speak he says in the *Story of My Life* like a gentleman Very few Englishmen in India would understand this remark as the Hindustanī they learn to speak is often the vulgar Hindustanī of illiterate servants or low class people Delhi Lucknow and Hyderabad (Deccan) are the three centres where Hindustanī as gentlemen are supposed to speak it may be learnt and Taylor was fortunate enough to secure a commission in the army of the Nizam at Hyderabad through the agency of Sir Charles Metcalfe Though his romances are written in English he often reproduces in them the flavour of cultured Indian conversation by using proper forms of address and oriental modes of expression He enjoyed his life in Hyderabad and was fond of mixing with the local gentry I was often asked he says in his autobiography to sit down with them while their carpets were spread and their attendants brought hookahs The result of this free intercourse with Indian gentlemen was that he got an insight into Indian life such as is shown by few other writers

Meadows Taylor visited England in 1838 just after his recovery from a severe illness in India The whole journey through Persia Arabia and other countries took about nine months This visit is important because it was in England that he published his first famous book *Confessions of a Thug* (1839) which laid the foundation of his literary career and brought him into public notice The suggestion to write the *Confessions* came from Sir Edward Bulwer

He sent me word says Taylor in his autobiography that had he possessed any local knowledge of India or its people he would write a romance on the subject why did I not do so? I pondered over this advice and hence my novel *Confessions of a Thug* (*The Story of My Life* p 73)

The subject of Thuggee had always fascinated him He had given much time to its study and speaks of it as the offspring of fatalism and superstition cherished and perfected by the wildest excitement that ever urged human

beings to deeds at which humanity shudders' ¹ He had assisted Colonel Sleeman in his investigations and the disclosures of Colonel Sleeman in 1832 had startled the whole civilized world The *Confessions* appeared at an opportune moment and Meadows Taylor suddenly found himself famous

This book stands apart from the rest of his work, not only in the nature of its subject, but also in the manner of its narration Its art is the result of its apparent artlessness It is a simple tale of what actually happened as told by one of the exponents of Thuggee himself, vitalized by great force of imagination and vividness of description Ameer Ali, the central figure of the book, was a real Thug examined by Meadows Taylor His *Confessions* were startling, 'a strange and horrible page in the varied record of humanity' ² Taylor lets him speak, apparently fascinated by the remarkable man, the perpetrator of hundreds of murders, who thinks of his past deeds with pleasure and satisfaction, who glories in describing the minutest particulars of his victims and his share in their destruction Ameer Ali is a '*Bhula Admee*', a 'most devout man in his life and conduct', who has said *inna* five times a day from his youth Withal he is a murderer, one

'before whom every murderer of the known world, in times past or present, except perhaps some of his own profession—the free bands of Germany, the Lanzknechts, the Banditti, the Condottieri of Italy, the Buccaneers and Pirates, and in our own time the fraternity of Burkes and Hares (a degenerate system of Thuggee, by the by, at which Ameer Ali laughed heartily, and said they were sad bunglers)—must be counted men of small account' (*Confessions*, p 264)

Ameer Ali is essentially human He loves fine dresses and good food, the excitement of war, and adventure He is a passionate lover, a devoted son and a loving father, whose only regret is that having some seven hundred and nineteen murders to his credit he did not reach four

¹ *Confessions of a Thug*, p 264

² *Ibid*, p 262

figures. He admires Cheetoo a fine looking man and a gallant leader. He is proud of having been received by him as a sirdar. He praises his justice and his horsemanship and knows how to flatter him.

The *Confessions* is a book by itself and has no connexion with the several novels that followed it. In the *Confessions* Meadows Taylor showed himself as a great realistic painter of Thuggee. In the novels that follow he is the chronicler of the romance of Indian history. His *Tippoo Sultan*, published in 1840 is the first of the historical romances that have made his name famous as the Scott of India. His romances show the influence of the great master. He learnt the art of re-creating the past in the school of Scott who, as we have seen, has himself described the pageantry and picturesque-ness of the gorgeous East in *The Surgeon's Daughter*. *Tippoo Sultan* may be said to be a continuation of *The Surgeon's*

Meadows Taylor knows his India as very few writers had known her before him. Naturally there is more of India in *Tippoo Sultan* than in *The Surgeon's Daughter*. Scott selects that period of the history of Mysore when Haidar Ali was still living. Meadows Taylor deals with the period subsequent to Haidar Ali's death. Scott knows the president of the council at Madras an able and active but unconscientious man who carried on mysterious intrigues with the natives through his Dubash the notorious Paupiah. He also knows the beautiful adventuress the Begum Montrevills. But he does not know any Indian except Barak el Hadij who is slightly drawn. Scott's imagination can help him to conjure up Indian scenes but not Indian characters. Scott has no character to show like Abdul Rhyman Khan the knightly Mussulman noble who having two wives living marries a third the beautiful Ameena. Nor has Scott any such scenes peculiarly Indian,

like the crossing of the Toombuddra at night or the reception of Ameena by the two wives of the Khan, Kummoobee and Hurmutbee Scott easily surpasses Taylor in the description of scenes like the Sultan's Durbar, or the movement of armies and the clash of arms, but the intimate knowledge of the *zenankhana* of a Mohammedan nobleman of the eighteenth century is obviously the result of experience gained on the spot. The old Khan is thus greeted by his two wives when they learn that he has got a third:

“‘Ill-conditioned!’ cried Kummoobee, “Alla, Alla, a man who has no shame—a man who is perjured—a man, who is less than a man, a poor, pitiful, unblest coward! Yes,” she exclaimed, her voice rising with her passion as she proceeded, “a namurd! a fellow who has not the spirit of a flea, to dare to come into the presence of women who, Inshalla! are daughters of men of family! to dare to approach us, and tell us that he has come, and brought with him a vile woman—an unchaste”” (vol 1, p 295)

Herbert Compton and Casim Ali are idealized types of English and Indian heroes. Jaffur is the typical scoundrel of romance and has his counterpart in Paupiah.

In the imaginative representation of historical events Meadows Taylor is an imitator of Scott. His description of the attack on Travancore by Tippoo is a masterpiece. The portrait of the ‘Tiger of Mysore’ is on conventional lines. He is represented as a ‘savage and merciless’ man, who delights in spearing bulls, and in smearing the face of the Brahmins with bull’s blood.¹

“Sometimes he uttered the noblest and loftiest sentiments of honour—again some frivolous or ridiculous idea would get possession of his imagination and drive him into the commission of a thousand absurdities and terrible cruelties. It was no uncommon thing to see beyond the precincts of the camp a row of miserable Hindoos hanging upon trees, who had defied the Sultan’s efforts at conversion, and had preferred death rather than change the religion of their fathers.”²

Tara is the most ambitious of Meadows Taylor's works and the first of that group of historical novels which constitute his famous trilogy. It is his greatest book excepting the *Confessions*. How it was begun and planned is described by the author himself in *The Story of My Life*.

The incidents and actions of the story had been planned for nearly twenty years and I knew all the scenes and localities described as I had the story in my mind during my visit to Beejapoor and had noted the details accurately while my long residence in an entirely native State and my intimate acquaintance with the people their manners habits and social organization gave me opportunities which I think few Englishmen have ever enjoyed of thoroughly understanding native life (vol II pp 358-9)

Tara was published in 1863 though planned twenty years before. The result of this careful planning is seen in the symmetry of its plot structure. Tara the widowed daughter of Vyas Shastri and his wife Anunda, is dedicated to the goddess Kali. She is carried off by Moro Trimmul and rescued by Fazil the gallant son of chivalrous Afzool Khan at the desecration of the temple at Tuljapoor. After the treacherous murder of Afzool Khan by Shivaji Tara again falls into the clutches of Moro Trimmul. In order to save her honour she declares herself sati but is saved in the nick of time by Fazil and his followers who carry her off slaying Moro Trimmul. Tara is then married to Fazil.

This is the bare outline of the main plot. But the book is full of fascinating scenes, idealized men and women and romantic situations. Meadows Taylor displays a wonderful knowledge of the domestic life of Hindus and Mohammedans. Anunda is a noble type of Hindu lady as Lurlee Khanum is a noble type of Moslem lady. Zyna the sister of Fazil is beautifully drawn. The variety of characters is amazing. The sleek, avaricious Tuls Dass is an unscrupulous scribe at the Mogul court. Pahar Singh represents the independent freebooters of the time combining in his person qualities of extreme daring and

cruelty; Moio Timmul combines the functions of a priest and spy. He is the villain of the piece. Ali Adil Shah, the chivalrous King of Bijapur, Shivaji, regarded with superstitious awe by his followers, and Afzool Khan are the chief historical figures of the novel. Both as giving the political history of the time and as a picture of the life of the period *Tara* will long hold a high position among Indian historical romances.

Ralph Darnell deals with the rise of British power in India and Clive's famous victory of Plassey. The plot, which is partly laid in England and partly in India, is simple. A gambling, drinking nephew of an English baronet, with the suspicion of illegitimacy hanging around him and disappointed in love, is abducted to India—the happy hunting-ground of political adventurers and a dumping-ground for all undesirable relations. Ralph Darnell not only distinguishes himself in the accepted style of English heroes, but like Esmond succeeds in clearing the mystery of his birth and obtaining the certificate of his mother's marriage. In this novel Meadows Taylor shows the influence of Thackeray to a marked degree. Ralph Darnell is a combination of the characters of Esmond, Pendennis, and Colonel Newcome. Shuja-ud-Dowla, 'a weak, sensual youth', is the wicked nawab of history. In the career of the Afghan orphan, Sozun, the novelist provides some elements of romance. The book throws some light on the life of Englishmen in India in the eighteenth century when 'the sudden transmission of an obnoxious relative to His Majesty's plantations in Virginia, or to a friend in Calcutta, Madras, or Bombay was by no means uncommon'.¹ Ralph, who was not squeamish, found in the English society of Calcutta 'harder drinking, coarser swearing and deeper play than he had been accustomed to, and a general tone of profligacy, which belonged to a lower grade of society as it were'.²

Seeta is the third novel of the famous trilogy. Behind

¹ *Ralph Darnell*, p. 187

² *Ibid*, p. 219

the romantic marriage of the beautiful Hindu widow to Cyril Brandon the Collector of Noorpoor we listen to the distant rumblings of the Mutiny of 1857 Seeta is a creation of romance her very faithfulness and devotion to the religion of her forefathers would make her marriage to Brandon improbable in real life Further Aunt Ella a hide bound Hindu widow not only tolerates but actually helps in the love intrigue Aunts of her type would rather see their daughters or nieces dead than married to a Christian Allowing for this fundamental error the character of Seeta is that of an idealized Hindu wife a copy of the character of her namesake of the Ramayana which it is the ambition of every Hindu lady to imitate She dies saving her lord and husband and she dies a Hindu in spite of her marriage to a Christian and the good seed that Mrs Pratt the missionary had sown in her soul There is good seed sown my dear says Mrs Pratt to Grace one day and it must germinate and grow and I shall be much mistaken if it does not I am no match for her in metaphysics ¹ Meadows Taylor is much too anxious to see the good seed germinate, and he regards Seeta as only a type of thousands and thousands of her country men and countrywomen who feel the truth of Christianity and are afraid of taking the final plunge The real interest of the book does not lie in characterization (though Azarael Pande is a notable character) or in the picture of the Mutiny but in the attitude of English men and women towards this marriage² and in the spicy detail of male and female doings and sayings of this period

Seeta p 295

11

teenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century had married Indian girls that such marriages though not quite approved were not condemned The marriage of a Resident at Hyderabad to one of the princesses whose daughter has been immortalized by Carlyle in his *Sartor Resartus* in the person of Blumine must have been known to Meadows

Seeta is inferior to *Tara* in breadth of canvas as well as in general consistency and vigour of conception. But it contains many passages of singular power and beauty. The first chapter describing the 'weird conclave of dakaitis with all its eerie surroundings' is written in the author's best style. Obviously Meadows Taylor knows his robbers and their haunts as well as he knows himself. The account of a robbery committed in the house of Haree Dass, and Seeta's visit to the Cow's Mouth, are good examples of his descriptive power.

In *Tara* Meadows Taylor is at the height of his powers. *Ralph Darnell* and *Seeta* show signs of exhaustion.

A Noble Queen is the last of the historical novels of Meadows Taylor. It describes the court-life and heroic career of the noble queen, Chand Bibi, who reigned in the

Taylor. The subject is discussed in the book itself. Lord Hylton writes to Cyril Brandon:

'The person who lives with you under the form of marriage you have patched up may be as beautiful and accomplished as Noormahal, but from my heart I wish you had never seen her. She could never take her place as your wife here and the idea of recognising such a person as Seeta as a member of our old family is, as you must see yourself on reflection, perfectly absurd and impossible.'

Lord Hylton, who sees in his brother a successor to the title, naturally regards this marriage as 'absurd and impossible'. He cannot imagine a Hindu widow occupying the seat of Lady Hylton. He objects to it on the ground of the prestige of the ancient family. The attitude of Anglo-India after the Mutiny is different. The reviewer of *Seeta* in the *Calcutta Review* (1873) regards such marriages as 'doubtful and dangerous'. He cannot understand why English civilians and military officers should marry natives, when the 'muds of merry England and the lassies of Bonnie Scotland are willing to share with us our joys and sorrows in the East'. Another writer in the *Calcutta Review* for 1879, discussing the probability of Meadows Taylor's characters, says 'Taras and Seetas, it need scarcely be mentioned, are absolutely *never* to be met with in Anglo-Indian drawing-rooms or boudoirs, and if dear interesting Aunt Ella herself, with her wearyful beads, short petticoats, and long staff, were to apply for an ayah's place in one of the nurseries of Chowringhee, her merits would have small chance of being recognised'. What has Aunt Ella's inability to find employment in Chowringhee to do with the probability of Meadows Taylor's characters? The writer is obviously offended with him because he not only marries Cyril Brandon to an Indian woman, but makes her so beautiful and good!

sixteenth century The character of Don Diego the Portuguese priest and adventurer is carefully drawn and the same idealism that characterizes Taylor's other books finds expression in this also

Meadows Taylor is one of those few writers who have tried to depict India as she is Before him the European conception of the East in general and of India in particular as illustrated in literature was extremely vague and often extravagantly ludicrous Beckford's *Vathek* Southey's *Love of Karra* Moore's *Lalla Rookh* are instances in point The orient of these writers as Professor Dunn has said was no more eastern than was Horace Walpole's residence at Strawberry Hill a Gothic structure ¹ Before Meadows Taylor as we have seen W B Hockley tried to give a realistic picture of India in his two novels *Pandurang Hari* and *Tales of the Zenana* Meadows Taylor in his preface to the *Confessions* acknowledges the merits of Hockley's work He belongs to the school of Hockley and Morier in his first book In his later books the tendency to idealism and romance is more prominent The realism that is such a prominent feature of the *Confessions* is confined to minor characters and presentation of Indian manners and customs in his historical romances

It will always be a matter of controversy as to which of the two classes of stories—the realistic *Confessions* or the idealistic romances—is better It is often a matter of taste Some like realism others romance According to Professor Oaten the fame of Meadows Taylor rests not on the *Confessions of a Thug* which though it first brought him fame stands entirely apart from the rest of his work but upon the series of splendid historical tales which he subsequently wrote ² Mr Sencourt on the other hand preferring the *Confessions* says A certain conventionality of romantic style a tendency to false effects and an incapacity to make adventure really exciting or absorbing

prevent these works from reaching the level of the *Confessions of a Thing*, which is simply a record of fact filled in by imagination and description till it attains the vividness of life.¹ It will be clear even to a casual student that artistically Taylor's historical romances are inferior to the *Confessions*. The plot of the romances is generally loose and leisurely and characterization is idealized at the cost of truth. Such beautiful and virtuous women as Tara and Seeta have always existed in India, but they would not have behaved as they did, particularly in the age to which they belonged. Tara, who is dedicated to Kali and who offers to become sati, may wed a Mohammedan gallant who saves her. But such marriages are not common. The effect is as bad as it would be if Scott were to marry Rebecca to Ivanhoe. The marriage of Seeta to Cyril Brandon is still more improbable. Seeta is a Hindu widow and very religious. If Tara's marriage is improbable, Seeta's is almost impossible. Our objection to this marriage is not like that of the English reviewers who object to mixed marriages on grounds of prestige. Our objection is on the ground of improbability.

14 *Other novelists, 1834-53.*

The novels of Anglo-Indian life written during 1834-53 generally aim at depicting not so much Indian as Anglo-Indian society. A novel published anonymously in 1834, and entitled *The Baboo and Other Tales* combines a satire on the baboo with a vivid description of the society and manners of Englishmen in Calcutta. A writer in the *Calcutta Review*, 1908, attributes it to Mr Augustus Prinsep. The Baboo, Brymohun Bonurjea, who is the villain of the piece, is not so important, nor is the plot remarkable; the story revolves round the love of the orphaned Eva Eldridge for Captain Forester, who is married to a beautiful Mohammedan Begum, Dilafroz. As a picture of Calcutta society, of its scandals and dissipations,

¹ Robert Sencourt, *India in English Literature*, p. 396

the book is praiseworthy. One of the finest chapters in the book is *The Baboo At Home*. The two other minor tales *Celebs the Younger* and *A Man of Sentiment in the Mofussil* describe the life of assistants in Calcutta and the Mofussil and are meant to show the contrasts society in India presents and the effects of local position on two similar characters.¹

Anglo India (1840) is a collection of papers, tales and fiction. *The Scribbleton Papers* is an amusing record of Miss Scribbleton's experiences in India in the form of letters to a friend in England. More interesting than the main theme is a letter of Mrs Scribbleton whose ingenuous comments throw a flood of light on the India of those days.

And though they call the place a settlement I never was so unsettled in all my life (p 133)

She has a frite to see so many blacks and all almost naked. She finds the Englishmen in Madras very proud and mighty genteel.

But lord ma am she writes what fine dinners they give here! and such quality hours! they never sit down to dinner before eight (p 135)

She feels disgusted at the waste of things at dinners where not half nor a quarter of the things were touched, and her heart seems to break when she finds that a surlyn of beef—a matter of fourteen lbs—was

all eat up by the parry ahs—some veracious wild animals I suppose for they devoured all that was left though it would have served for a dozen people (p 135)

She could not eat anything for several days because of the black hands of her servants bakers and cooks

yet my husband says the hands of the natives are as clean if not cleaner than ours now how can that be for they are black as sut? (p 136)

Like many Englishwomen even of to-day she feels aghast at the number of servants everybody keeps here, and she refers to Mr Singleton, who had nearly fifty of them. One thing, however, that gives her pleasure is that it is not necessary

'to lock up tea and sugar here, for the black servants never eat any thing we do. Their religion will not permit them'

Mrs Scribbleton is a dear creature

The Indigo Planters is an illuminating record of the days when indigo plantations were a coveted possession. The two Hyssop brothers, 'tinctured with the hate so often indulged by the vulgar classes of Europeans against the Hindoo', legally rob Rutnab of the large paddy tract on which he had spent considerable sums, and pull down a temple dedicated to a goddess. Even the passive Hindus, 'those creatures of endurance',¹ are roused, and the Hysops save themselves with difficulty.

Confessions of An Eurasian is sad reading. In these confessions Mr Middlerace, 'the child of a casual congress between a major in the Honourable Company's service and a decent Pariah family, named Latchmy Ubbey' seeks temporary relief from the pangs of humbled pride and disappointed ambition. How he is treated by Englishmen in India and England is the result partly of his own foolish pretensions and partly of the lack of sympathy on the part of Englishmen for a class which they have been responsible for bringing into existence.

Another interesting and human book is *The Lady of the Manor* (1844) by Mrs Sherwood. Mrs Sherwood was born in 1775 and died in 1851. She is the celebrated authoress of the famous story *Little Henry and his Bearer* (1844). And she occupies an honoured place as the author of several delightful books for children. Olivia, the heroine of one of the stories, tells her own tale. She lost her mother as a child. At the age of ten she was sent to Eng-

land attended by her ayah for education. She appeared before the school mistress—in *paunjamahs*, shawl cap and *labardour* and ringlets well saturated with cocoanut oil. After eight years of education, she returned to India and found her father dead. Her uncle, who had married a *Mussulmaunnee* took charge of her. She gives a glimpse of her uncle's strange household full of ill-mannered wild boys and girls. At a dinner party Olivia meets the civil surgeon's wife who is described as having become half an Indian from long residence in India. She had acquired a haughty indifference of manner, was devoted to finery, drank a great quantity of beer, was excessively stout and smoked her hookah in public. Olivia saw an Indian Bazaar with its

streets filled with Pariah dogs, miserable children, praying or rather howling devotees, scolding women with jingling bangles on their ankles and other abominations.

Olivia married one Mr. Milbourne, though she did not love him, and settled down to a life of such luxury and splendour as does not now often fall to the lot of poor Anglo-Indians.¹ She became semi-orientalized after a few years of this luxurious and indolent existence.

Olivia describes her own life. She rose early and took the air on an elephant, after which she retired for a nap. At ten o'clock breakfast was served. She entertained guests while her husband was deeply engaged with the hookah. This was followed by the reading of light literature while she supervised the work of four *dirgees*—tailors. At *tiffin* there were more visitors, then a doze and an evening ride.

'It was one of the pleasures of my life,' she writes, 'to see the variety of equipages, horses and elephants which were paraded every evening in the front of our house, among which was a handsome phaeton, a ton-jon, an elephant with his superb howdah, a gig or buggy, as we called it, other carriages of inferior note and several saddle horses, and it was not seldom in the cold season that after having surveyed all these

I have dismissed them, every one, and preferred a walk in the ornamented pleasure-grounds which surrounded the house'

A splendid dinner, followed by cards, played up to a late hour, concluded the day.

Among other books we may mention a novel by Sir J W. Kaye, *Long Engagements* (1846), which is meant to show that there is very little real difference between society in India and society in England. We are presented here with a picture of a lady idly flirting in Calcutta whilst her husband is fighting the battles of his country in Afghanistan

15. *W D Arnold*

In 1853 there appeared two novels, *The Wetherbys* by John Lang, and *Oakfield or Fellowship in the East* by W D. Arnold. Both of them show the vices of Anglo-Indian society in the ugliest colours. Mr Lang is bitter, and full of caustic satire and 'caricatures of bygone types of English and half-castes',¹ while Mr Arnold, the cultured and sensitive son of Dr Arnold of Rugby and a brother of Matthew Arnold, is disgusted with his life in India. In *Oakfield* Mr Arnold has given a portrait of himself. Oakfield, a clergyman's son, revolted by the conventionality of English social and religious life goes to India as an ensign in the service of the East India Company, thinking that a less sophisticated and purer atmosphere existed in England's dependency than at home. On his arrival in India he became a member of a regimental mess, the members of which never spoke without an oath, were given to gambling, and were all in debt, fought duels, and never spoke of India or its people without disgust and contempt. He calls them 'mere animals with no single idea on any subject in the world beyond their carcasses'. This is how he records his impressions

'Courtesy to inferiors (Heaven save the mark in this

¹ Oaten, *Sketch*, p 152

country I fancy talking to an officer of courtesy to a native!)

I had always thought of a mess as the abode of luxurious refinement even it might be to effeminacy I find it a bad tavern' (*Oatfield* vol 1 p 40)

He was struck with the extraordinary fact of British dominion, so manifest everywhere apparently so firmly planted in the soil and yet so manifestly separable from it He begins to doubt the moral value of British power in India Oatfield almost openly despairs of the whole race of Indians Stanton an Anglo Indian of ten years standing is made to say

Of course I did not like India nobody does People who ship their sons off to India every day little think to what a blighted life they are sending them (vol 1 p 80)

Revolted by every phase of Anglo-Indian life disliking India its climate its people both English and Indian failing to notice any noble aims in the administration yet clinging to his ideals sad depressed and disillusioned he returns to England with shattered health only to die there Mr W D Arnold's book is a terrible denunciation of Anglo Indian life in the nineteenth century That he could not find anything to interest him in India was the result of his peculiar temperament and upbringing But that Anglo Indian society was far from good is also clear

16 *Post Mutiny novels, 1859-69*

The decade following the Mutiny is strangely silent about the crisis through which British rule had just passed The novels published in this period, if we omit Meadows Taylor and Wilkie Collins's *The Moonstone* are not worth much Mr Edward Money's *The Wife and the Ward, or A Life's Error* was published in 1859 and as the title indicates it is a tale of an unhappy marriage It was republished in 1881 under the title *Woman's Fortitude—A Tale of Cannpore* The last chapter, which describes the

tragedy of Cawnpore, has little to do with the main story. The change in the title of the book is significant. No other novelist of this decade refers to the Mutiny. Two other books, published in 1859, are by Mr. John Lang, who is a pre-Mutiny novelist. So was Meadows Taylor, whose *Tara* was published in 1863, and *Ralph Darnell* in 1865. Major Charles Kirby's *The Adventures of an Arcot Rupee*, though published in 1867, 'attempts to give some account of the British rule in India when Wellesley and Tipu Sultan were the conflicting heads'. Wilkie Collins's famous mystery novel *The Moonstone* (1868) is not an Anglo-Indian novel, though he introduces in it devoted Hindu priests and dark mysterious Brahmins. Florence Marryat (Mrs Ross Church), the daughter of the famous nautical romancer and author of 'some ninety novels',¹ published *Gyp* in 1868. It contains vivacious sketches of Anglo-Indian life and character, but it is not a novel. It consists of reprints from the *Temple Bar* magazine. Her Anglo-Indian novel *Veronique* (1869) takes the reader to Ooty and describes the life at a Southern hill-station. It is after 1870 that Anglo-Indian novels of a fairly high standard were again written.

17 *Precursors of Kipling*—*Phil Robinson, Prichard, Cunningham, and Alexander Allardyce*

Among the writers of the early 'seventies, Phil Robinson occupies a respected place. His first book, *Nugae Indicae*, published at Allahabad, at the Pioneer Press, is dated 1873. But, as it is dedicated to the 'critics who by their reception of the First Edition have brought the present volume upon themselves', the date of its publication must have been earlier. It purports to be a selection from Zech Oriel's Note Book. Phil Robinson is not so much a writer of fiction as an essayist. His books are at best sketches of Indian birds, places, scenes, and persons. *Nugae Indicae* appeared under the title *In My Indian Garden* (1871). It

has a preface by Sir Edwin Arnold who sees in these sketches the beginnings of a new field of Anglo Indian literature Sir Edwin justly remarks

They are only sketches no doubt which fill this little portfolio but their outlines are often drawn with so true a hand that nothing can be more suggestive to the memory of any one who has lived the same life India may be hot dusty distant and whatever else the weary exile alleges when his liver goes wrong but she is never for one moment or in any spot as regards her people her scenery her cities towns villages or country places vulgar There is nothing in her not worth study and regard for the stamp of a vast past is over all the land and the very pariah-dogs are classic to those who know Indian fables and how to be entertained by them Our Author is one of the happy few in whom familiarity with Indian sights and objects has not bred indifference (p 1x)

In his Prefatory Index and Preface to the Reader the author gives an indication of his interest in India and things Indian

On my arrival in India says he, a new world to me I sprouted all over with green ideas And I doubt if any one was so strangely affected by India as was I for after landing I laughed three days almost without intermission Since then the circumstances that moved my mirth stir only my compassion and I have ceased to laugh at India or its people

The book is divided into four parts In an Indian garden The Indian seasons Among the crops and Miscellaneous All the sketches are written in a light humorous style and do justice to the author's accurate observation learning and humanity Sense of humour is his most noticeable gift and redeems the most common place subject from the charge of vulgarity His observations on the Indian *mallie* the *pinkah coolie* and the *chaukidar* are interesting and witty They show that Phil Robinson belongs to the famous group of seventeenth century character writers Often as in his description of Christmas in India without bells beef holly mistletoe

without a dance, without a single Merry Christmas wish', he strikes the deepest note of tender feeling and anticipates a host of later Anglo-Indian writers who have given melancholy accounts of the artificiality and insincerity of the Christmas of the exiles in India. His beautiful sketch of Sudhoo, who lived in a cottage whose 'walls are not so strong as the ant-hills of Pero', is the nearest approximation to a story in the best vein of Kipling. Buggoo, the chaukidar or night-watchman, who sleeps all day because he is supposed to have kept awake all night, is typical of chaukidars. *The Gnome of the Hillock* is a story describing the simple and superstitious Indian village folk. The eleventh essay, entitled *From the Raw to the Rotten*, omitted from *In My Indian Garden*, is a witty sketch of the characteristics of a griff or a newcomer, and a *Qui Hai* or an old resident in India. The one is raw, the other is rotten. Mr Phil Robinson's place in the history of Anglo-Indian literature, apart from the merits of his work, acquires interest from the remarkable resemblance between his sketches and Kipling's *Plain Tales from the Hills*. It is not improbable that Kipling in his youth read *Nugae Indicae*, and imbibed much of its spirit. *Under the Pankab*, the author's second book, shows the same characteristics. All its sketches, however, are not Indian. Some of them are merely a reproduction, with some changes, of his essays in *In My Indian Garden* or *Nugae Indicae*. For example, the beautiful description of his 'Quasi-sentimental journey' from Allahabad to Nynetel is reproduced as 'Sight-seeing' in this book, with which is amalgamated another essay of the earlier book entitled 'Railway Travelling'. The new essay contains an interesting passage on the 'obstinate contrariety of the native'.

'Even in small things we are antipodes. Whatever an Englishman will do standing, a native will do sitting. The former beckons by moving his finger upwards, the latter by pawing the air downwards. We chirrup to a horse to make it go, a native chirrups to make it stop. When an Englishman

has been using an umbrella he rests it against the wall handle upwards but a native puts it handle downwards We blow our noses with our right hand wiping them downwards they with their left hand and rub their noses upwards If we wish to put a thing down we do so on the nearest table a native if undisturbed puts a thing down—on the ground We write from left to right they (most of them) from right to left the leaves of our books turn to the left but when we read in native books they turn to the right In civilized places the shepherd drives his flock before him here he makes one of the flock or goes in front Even the birds are contrary to Western nature (p 78)

The Chronicles of Budgepore in two volumes (1871) or *Sketches of Life in Upper India* by Iludus Prichard is another remarkable book of the pre Kipling period The author informs the reader in the first chronicle that Budgepore is a typical place and that the Budgeporeans are both natives and English Most of the characters have funny names showing the official position of the person named For example the Collector of Budgepore is called Mr C

the judge is called Mr Basil Mooltawee one who is fond of postponing cases Budgepore and Budgeporeans should be taken as representative of the official life of Anglo Indians and Indians in Upper India The character of this life according to the author is red tape and whitewash and these much resemble the same articles in London and Paris The sketches are readable written in a clear simple journalistic style and show that Mr Prichard like Old Mortality, possesses great aptitude for studying men and manners an untiring perseverance in sifting mysteries and a most acute sense of the ridiculous He mercilessly exposes the foibles of the official Anglo Indian both civil and military His knowledge of law and its practice in Indian courts enable him to bring prominently into notice the ridiculous side of Anglo Indian administration of justice And he

misses no opportunity of poking fun at the expense of judges who administered the law without knowing it. All the sketches are vivacious and witty, satiric in intent, condemning 'law's delays' and incidentally showing the influence of Scott and Dickens. *The Chronicles* constitute a remarkable addition to Anglo-Indian literature of the nineteenth century. Mr Prichard looks upon life critically and no character or institution escapes his castigation. If the European administrators are ignorant slaves of red tape without initiative or originality, the natives are all liars and untrustworthy, but clever in making fools of their European masters.

Mr Prichard's shrewdness may be judged from an interesting passage in the second volume

'One very curious effect of the Indian climate has never received the attention it deserves. Elsewhere, so long as a man or woman gives no colour to a scandalous report, the thing dies out generally, and people cease to believe ill of one whose outward conduct is irreproachable. But in India there seems to be some evil principle at work, or some noxious moral disease that infests the whole tone of society, such a proneness to speak ill of your neighbour, to encourage ill-natured tittle-tattle, such a shameless indifference to truth, such a pitiful eagerness to take advantage of another, as if in every walk in life, in the social as well as the official circle, every man and every woman was a rival to every other man and woman, that society seems to catch at the idea of a scandalous report, however infamously unjust, as if it had found a prize. It is a wonder that the blistered tongue has never been set down in the list of Indian diseases' (p. 27)

Like *The Chronicles of Budgepore*, Sir Henry Stuart Cunningham's *Chronicles of Dusstypore* is written in a light, airy, satiric vein. It is a clever and refreshing book with a hot and dusty country as its subject, where, as the author tells us, there is sand everywhere and a good deal of it in the heads of the officials. But the satire on official life is not so pronounced as in *The Chronicles of Budgepore*. The Salt Board with the mysterious Rumble Chander Grant

is drudging in the scorching plains. The flirtations of Maud verge on tragedy, but she is ultimately saved by her love for her husband. The book is remarkable for the brilliance and ease of its conversations, naturalness of characterization and vividness of description. It is still more interesting for another reason. Cunningham is Kipling in the making. Not only is the germ of what is to be found in the *Plain Tales from the Hills* contained in the *Chronicles of Dustypore* but something more besides. Rumble Chander Grant reminds one of the ravel of the inter tribal complications across the Border on which Wressley of the Foreign Office wrote his *magnum opus*.

Another noticeable feature of the book is that the characters are taken from contemporary society. Mr Dhar in an article in the *Calcutta Review* (1908)¹ on the authority of a recent issue of *Bengal Past and Present* the organ of the Calcutta Historical Society points out that Dustypore is Lahore and Elysium Simla. Felicia is Mrs Waterfield (R H W) to whom the book is dedicated while Desvœux is Sir Lepel H. Griffin formerly Chief Secretary to the Government of the Punjab. Fotheringham is Mr Lindsay and Sutton is Brigadier Keayes and two other Punjab heroes rolled into one. According to the *Athenæum* however Colonel afterwards General Sutton is no other than Lord Napier of Magdala.

Cunningham's second novel *The Caruleans* (1887) is a work of high merit. In it he gives sketch after sketch of Anglo Indian characters—the middle aged and philosophic Chichele² who was convinced that an official day ought to end with a good dinner and that good dinners are most enjoyed when partaken of in the company

¹ Kiran Nath Dhar. *Some Indian Novels* p. 360

² Mr Chichele is intended for the late Sir M P Grant Duff Governor of Madras in the eighties. *Calcutta Review* p. 376

of agreeable and intelligent women', and who knew as much about British India as the 'internal economy of Kamschatka', Sir Theophilus Prance, who annoyed Chichele by making his head-quarters the rendezvous of all sorts of objectionable tourists, Philip Ambrose, the good-looking but improvident collector without any will of his own or principles, Mrs. Paragon, who had great powers of satirical comment, the Miss Scratchlys, who, 'under the embittering effects of neglect and years, had hardened into a mood incompatible with goodwill either towards man or woman', Miss Florence Rashleigh, the English beauty fresh from home, who lent lustre to Cœrulea and 'inspired each martial bosom with chivalrous devotion', the witty Mr Montem, externally irritable, and unconciliatory like a porcupine, but internally full of the milk of human kindness, the silent, strong Sinclair, who regards existence as 'a grave, rather a grim affair, where each one has his load of duty to carry', and lastly Camilla, who in moral and intellectual fibre, in taste and tone, in earnestness of purpose, in purity of character, and above all, in the delicacy of conscience, is worlds above her easy-going husband. Then we have in Lady Miranda the shallow tourist who is disappointed because she finds everything in India 'less uncivilized, characteristic and picturesque than she had hoped that India would prove to be'. That a girl like Camilla married to a man like Philip Ambrose was bound to be unhappy is obvious from the beginning. His sudden death sends her back to England. This story of unhappy marriage is different from other similar stories in that the tragedy is not due to the interference of a third party. The book is not so remarkable for the simple love story that runs through it, as for the masterly descriptions of persons and places, skilful analysis of character, a constant play of wit and humour, and an easy, polished style. Incidentally, several theories of government are discussed in this book.

Alexander Allaidyce, who later on wrote the Highland

novel *Balmoral* (1893) showing a wonderful knowledge of Highland genealogy and local history wrote in 1877 *The City of Sunshire* a novel dealing with the romance and history of a Bengal village Dhupnagar in the Ganges Basin. It is an Indian novel dealing with Indian life. Mr Eversley the magistrate of the old school who expresses himself better in colloquial Hindustani than in English, and who is in the habit of closing his court whenever he gets a chance of hunting a tiger, is the only Englishman in this long novel. The rest of the characters with the exception of that hybrid popinjay Mr Roy the Brahmo barrister belong to Dhupnagar. In his knowledge of Indian life and character both Hindu and Mohammedan, in his insight into the working of the forces that make an Indian village what it is the author is the equal of Meadows Taylor. In the variety and range of characterization he is perhaps Meadows Taylor's superior. But while Taylor is inclined towards romance and idealism Allardyce is on the whole a realist. The wide acquaintance that he shows with Indian conditions and the little crowded world of the Indian village is remarkable. The plot centres round Radha the sylph like daughter of Baboo Kristo Doss Lahary.

'It was as if the head and neck of Artemis Diana had been planted upon the body and limbs of Venus Anadyomene (vol II p 137)

She is loved by Krishna, the young Brahmin who rebels against the faith of his fathers by the cavalier son of the old Subedar Shamsusdeen Khan and by the unscrupulous son of an oil seller the Dipty' Preonath. Even the villain of the novel Tin Cowry or Three Shells the miserly Mahajan of Dhupnagar aspires to her hand. That Afzul wins her is obvious whether he deserves her is doubtful. Mr Allardyce has tried to give us a peep into the zenana. He shows us Chakwi the neglected wife of Krishna and takes us into Radha's boudoir. Though his imagination

is powerful and the purdah is no barrier for him, yet, as the Indian reader may judge from Radha's conversation with her maid-servant Sukheena, Radha is an abnormal girl, much too bold and forward for a Hindu girl. Even before her marriage she is represented as saying like a modern miss :

“I should wrinkle my brows and ruffle my hair if I were to get angry with you just now, Sukheena, so go away, and do not irritate me. Away and watch for the approach of my brave bridegroom, and give me timely notice that I may put on my holiday smiles, and heat up a kiss or two to regale him with”
(vol. II, p. 159)

Chakwi is truer to life, though Mr. Allardyce forgets that Hindu girls never address their husbands by name. These are minor defects which may be ignored, and it gives us real pleasure to find that Mr. Allardyce has succeeded in doing what very few Anglo-Indian writers have been able to do—re-creating a Bengal village and peopling it with men and women of flesh and blood. Of the many creations of Mr. Allardyce the two who deserve a special mention are Bejoy the Ghatak, and Subedar Shamsusdeen Khan, who is good enough to take his place by the side of Roland Caxton and may be named in the same breath even with Uncle Toby. The author loves Agha and Afzul and has nothing but contempt for Bengalees, still the hero of the book is Krishna Chandra Gosain, whose religious struggles teach him that

“There is no creed so bad but it may serve to comfort some poor soul, and before you root out a plant you should always make sure that there is sufficient soil left to nurture another”
(vol. III, p. 284)

Mr. Allardyce's power of delineation is well illustrated by the following passage describing the person of Preonath, the Deputy Magistrate :

“His skin was almost as black as a negro's, and his round face, narrow brow, and irregular features contrasted strongly



with the aristocratic countenance of the master of the house. He was dressed in a long *chapkan* or coat cut in a fashion half oriental half European which is much affected by the Anglicised natives. He wore a pair of white duck trousers with patent leather English boots, a heavy gold chain attached to his watch was wound in two or three folds about his neck, and a little gold laced cap was perched jauntily upon his crisp black curls. In short his whole appearance was such as may any day be seen loitering about the Presidency College gate or Wellesley Square or any of the other haunts of Young Bengal in Calcutta (vol 1 pp 29-30)

There is a vein of light humour running throughout the three volumes, and the questions of caste marriage religious customs and practices and education are touched upon in passing.

The humour satire, exquisite workmanship and intimate knowledge of official life and of Anglo Indian society whether in the plains or on the hill top which characterize the novels of Phil Robinson, Itudus Pri chard, and Sir Henry Cunningham mark them out as worthy predecessors of Kipling.

CHAPTER III

RUDYARD KIPLING

A SURVEY OF HIS INDIAN STORIES

18 *Kipling's Anglo-Indian stories*

KIPLING'S work relating to India was mainly done between 1888 and 1891 and is embodied in *Plain Tales from the Hills*, *Soldiers Three and other Stories*, *Wee Willie Winkie and other Stories*, and *Life's Handicap*. These four volumes cover ninety-six stories, taking the eight scenes of the story of the Gadsbys as a single story. All these stories have a genuine Indian atmosphere about them, and deal with Kipling's own time and 'own people'. They are the product of a vividly realized personal experience, shrewd observation and sympathy. In most of the stories, remarkable for their variety both of treatment and subject-matter, Kipling celebrates and perpetuates a certain type of Anglo-Indian character with which he was thoroughly familiar, that is, the hard-working and self-sacrificing civil servant, or the subaltern doing his duty under difficult conditions. In some stories he shows a sympathetic understanding of the British soldier in India, full of humour and tolerance. A large group gives a picture of Anglo-Indian society in holiday mood, its main occupation being 'playing tennis with the seventh commandment'. A smaller group deals with Indians in their contact with the English.

Enough has been written about Kipling's treatment of Anglo-Indian society by English and American critics of note. The clever, witty, and brilliant Mrs Hauksbee of Simla, the wicked heroine of Kipling who combines generosity with malice in an exquisite manner, the mischievous Mrs Reiver who makes a business of wickedness, the Three Musketeers of India, with the inimitable Mulvaney as their leader, who regards a parade on Thursday

as flyin in the face firstly av Nature secon av the Rig lations and thurd the will av Terence Mulvaney his friend Ortheris a bloomin eight anna dog stealing Tommy, with a number, instead of a decent name who in a fit of home sickness longs for the sounds of London an the sights of er, and the stinks of 'er the Estreekin Sahib of the Indian Police who is disliked by Anglo India because of his 'outlandish custom of prying into native life the little Tods who opens the eyes of the Law Member of the Viceroy's Council and many other Anglo Indian characters are already well known to readers of English fiction all over the world

19 *Kipling's Indian stories*

It would not however, be out of place to examine in some detail another aspect of Kipling's work in which the Anglo Indians do not figure so prominently. These Indian stories of Kipling have not been properly understood or appraised. They have escaped criticism. To European and American critics possessing little or no personal knowledge of India, Kipling's Indian stories revealed a world of mystery and romance the very strangeness of which paralysed their critical acumen. Even an excellent critic like Mr Walter Hart who in his scholarly work *Kipling The Short Story Writer* attempts to observe and analyse Kipling's short stories objectively and dispassionately does not show much better judgement than his countryman the bustling Mr Nicholas Tarvin of Topaz who had no measures and standards for a new world so unlike his own and which lacked the real old fashioned downright rustle and razzle dazzle and git up and git¹ of America. Mr Hart thinks that Kipling

can put himself in their [the natives] places see the world through their eyes realize for himself their emotions to a degree possible only for one who had spoken like Tods or Wee

Willie Winkie, many of their dialects, delighted in their society and regarded them as brothers '¹

Did Kipling do so? Did he understand us? Did he regard us as brothers? These are interesting questions which may be re-examined in the light of evidence which has hitherto been generally ignored.

Out of the ninety-six stories mentioned above only twenty-eight may be said to be Indian as distinguished from Kipling's Anglo-Indian stories. These stories may again be divided into two groups, one consisting of anecdotes, sketches and stories in which Indians alone play the chief part, and the second comprising those in which Indians are minor characters: a khansaman, a khitmatgar, a sais, or a subordinate. In many of the Anglo-Indian stories, Indian characters who are introduced are members of an Anglo-Indian household (menials), they do not contribute anything of importance to the development of the plot or its denouement. To the purely Indian group of Kipling's stories belong, *In the House of Suddhoo*, *The Gate of a Hundred Sorrows*, *The Story of Muhammad Din*, and *To be Filed for Reference* from the *Plum Tales from the Hills*, the eight stories that make up *In Black and White*, and *The Head of the District*, *Through the Fire*, *Finance of the Gods*, *Bubbling Well Road*, and *The City of Dreadful Night*, from *Life's Handicap*. Even the most ardent admirer of Kipling will not claim any extraordinary merit for these stories (possibly excepting two). They neither show much knowledge of, nor sympathy for, Indian life and character. They at best touch the outskirts of Indian life, often in its abnormal, crude and unimportant aspects. In these stories Kipling does not write 'of Life and Death, and men and women, and Love and Fate according to the measure of his ability' ². Some of them are not stories at all. *The City of Dreadful Night* is an exquisite description of a midsummer vigil

¹ Kipling, *the Short Story Writer*, p. 17

² *Life's Handicap*, Preface, p. ix

that the author was forced to keep on account of the dense wet heat that hung over Lahore and prevented all hope of sleep. It is a masterpiece of word painting. There are no characters and no incidents but there are passing references to a stubble bearded weary eyed trader balancing his account books and uplifting his hand with the precision of clock work to wipe his streaming forehead to a policeman lying across the road turbanless and fast asleep to the janitor of the Mosque of Wazir Khan and a Hindu woman who died of heat stroke in the middle of the night. Kipling here gives us a picture worthy of Gustave Dore. The summer of Lahore has been immortalized in words that may creditably bear comparison with the most vivid descriptions of Zola but *The City of Dreadful Night* is not a story. *Moti Gaj—Mutineer* is a parable and anticipates the stories of *The Jungle Books*. *The Amir's Homily* is a homily and the Amir is not an Indian. *Dray Wara Yow Dee* also is a story of Pathan vendetta beyond the Indian Border. The injured husband is maddened by the desire for revenge. He wanders through the plains of Hindustan hoping to get his enemy Daoud Shah into his power when he proposes to kill him quick and whole with the knife sticking firm in his body. Let it be in the day time says he that I may see his face and my delight may be crowned. Kipling skilfully avoids the borders of melodrama and gives a presentation of revenge as in Poe's *Cask of Amontillado*. But like Poe he is dealing with an abnormal situation and sometimes lays on the colours too thickly. That the head of the unfaithful wife is severed at the neckbone is bad enough to hack off her breasts is savagery. The same remarks apply to the Indian tale, entitled *Beyond the Pale*. The setting is Indian but the situation is abnormal. Trejago's brief amour with the Hindu widow of fifteen ends much too horribly. Bisesa's punishment will be accepted only by those who regard Indians as half savages. *The Return of Imray* is based upon a belief in the

evil eye Bahadur Khan again is a Pathan who murders his master because he believes that Imray had bewitched his child. The story is more important as displaying the detective powers of Strickland than the author's knowledge of India or Indians. Long before the days of Kipling it was customary to associate with orientals all that is bizarre, weird, savage, or uncommon. The life of an ordinary Indian is as little mysterious as that of an ordinary European, which Kipling, having lived in India, must have known. Yet it is the abnormal and the mysterious element in our life which Kipling constantly emphasizes. *The Return of Imray* is not convincing. The motive is not adequate. A servant may kill his English master, but only from a stronger motive than that mentioned in the story. Similarly little Tobrah, who pushes his helpless blind sister into the water to save her from starvation, is not a representative character. It is a cynical treatment of a heart-rending situation. Tobrah is not a normal Indian child, nor Bisesa a normal Hindu widow, nor Bahadur Khan a typical servant. *In the House of Suddhoo* is a story showing how the belief of Indians of the lower classes in magic and witchcraft is exploited to fleece the ignorant and the credulous. The description of the supposed possession of the seal-cutter is a powerful piece of realistic prose on the same high level as *The City of Dreadful Night*. In *The Finance of the Gods* the victim of superstition is a miserly Hindu who is robbed of a lac of rupees. This story is simpler in construction and more unified, but it is not so powerful in its effect as *In the House of Suddhoo*. In some of these stories the omniscience of the author, which is unnecessarily forced on the reader's attention, causes a feeling of irritation. At the end of the story, the author, like a clever juggler, seems to wait for the approbation of the audience.

Four stories, *The Judgment of Dungara*, *At Howli Thana*, *Gemini*, and *The Sending of Dara Da*, are satirical in intent. Satire, as distinguished from humour, skims the surface of life, it never goes deep enough. *The Judgment of Dungara*

is a satire on missionaries labouring to win the millions of India for Christ. But they do not know the clever native priests they have to deal with. Just as in *The Naulahka* all the work of American doctors is rendered futile in a day, similarly in this story the leading converts of the Tübingen Mission revert to the worship of the great God Dungara the God of Things as They Are. The Reverend Justus Krenk and his wife are heart broken. 'Alas' remarks the author 'man cannot live by grace alone if meat be wanting!'. The same cynical attitude of Kipling towards missionaries is illustrated in the return of the heart broken Lispeth to her ancestral gods. The satire however spoils this story, which is essentially tragic. *At Howli Thana* is a satire on native police who are in collusion with the dacoits against whom they are supposed to operate. *Gemini* is meant to illustrate the native proverb quoted by Kipling at the beginning of the story. Great is the justice of the White Man—greater the power of a lie. The Marwari brothers, P P P P

wickedness of this melodrama Kipling introduces their aunt as an accomplice of Ram Dass. It is not often that Kipling travels beyond the borders of the India that he knew the India of Pathan servants and orderlies of scamps and cut throats of superstitious Suddhoos and fanatical lepers but whenever he attempts to do so as in this story the result is disappointing. The common belief among Englishmen that Indians think very lightly of perjury is thus expressed in *The Bronckhorst Divorce Case*.

No jury we knew would convict a man on the criminal count on native evidence in a land where you can buy a murder charge including the corpse all complete for fifty four rupees.

There is no justification for sweeping statements of this character. *The Head of the District* propagates the view that the martial races of India would most strongly object to Indianization of the administration that they would

sooner accept sweepers as their rulers than, for example, Bengalees. Mr. Grish Chunder D.C., M.A., whom the 'Very Greatest of All the Viceroy's' selects as the successor to Mr. Yardley-Orde, had won his place in the Bengal Civil Service in open competition. He is cultured, and had wisely and sympathetically ruled a crowded district in south-eastern Bengal. He possesses a remarkable knowledge of law, is not inefficient so far as routine and desk-work go, and is pleasant to talk to. As the ruler of a district in the south of Dacca he 'did no more than turn the place into a pleasant family preserve, allowed his subordinates to do what they liked, and let everybody have a chance at the shekels'. Thus he became popular. He fails in the Border District of Kumarsen, because he was 'born in a hot-house, of stock bred in a hot-house', and feared 'physical pain as some men fear sin'. Khuda Dad Khan is made to say:

'He is a *Kala Admi*—a black man—unfit to run at the tail of a potter's donkey. All the peoples of the earth have harried Bengal. It is written: Thou knowest when we of the North wanted women or plunder whither went we? To Bengal—where else?'

The real Khuda Dad Khan may or may not think so. Anglo-India certainly does. Such stories leave a very unpleasant impression on the mind. They encourage racial pride and engender racial ill-will.

There is a group of short stories dealing with Eurasian and Christian life, and mixed marriages. This group contains some of the best of Kipling's purely Indian stories. *His Chance in Life* and *To be Filed for Reference* deal with what Kipling calls the 'Borderline where the last drop of white blood ends and the full tide of black sets in'. Miss Vezzis in *His Chance in Life* comes from the Borderline. She is black and hideous but inordinately proud. Michele D'Cruze, a poor, sickly weed and also of very dark complexion, makes love to Miss Vezzis after the fashion of the Borderline, which is hedged round with much ceremony.

But poor Michele could not hope to marry her until he was able to earn at least fifty rupees a month to start married life with Michele D Cruze gets his promotion by doing good work out of all proportion to his pay because of the white drop in his veins Similarly McIntosh Jellaludin a scholar and a gentleman when sober is a sketch of a sahib of low caste who has turned Mussulman He goes from bad to worse during his seven years of degradation and drink He is married to a girl from Jullundur She excels in the culinary art and loves her drunken loafer of a husband Lispeth is also a Christian convert She has the misfortune to fall in love with an Englishman who according to the chaplain's wife is made of a superior clay for Lispeth to fall in love with him was an act of barbarous and most indelicate folly The theme is tragic and the satiric treatment of chaplains and chaplains' wives does not fit in with the tragic note Kipling had real sympathy for hill girls He had been impressed by their beauty and humanity Lispeth's disappointment is keen and it is well portrayed *Yoked with an Unbeliever* is another story of a hill girl married to an English planter Phil Garron of Darjiling according to the forms of the English Church Phil is considered a fool by his fellow planters He is also admired by an English girl What is manifestly unfair is that an Indian girl should make him happy and save him from perdition' The story is sketchy but Dunmaya's love lends it beauty The triangular situation with some differences arises in *Georgie Porgie* Unlike the foolish tea planter of the other story Georgie Porgie does not marry the beautiful Burman but pays for her She makes him comfortable and happy, which suggests to him the thought that he might be still more comfortable and happy with a girl of his own race For all that he is a fool he is a girl There is nothing more hopeless wanderings of Georgie's lover Georgie Porgie never thought that the Burmese

girl whom he had bought, according to the custom of her country, would learn to love him. As he looks across the cloud-filled valley with his English wife leaning against his shoulder, contented and happy, Georgina, suffering from 'a queer little cough' is crying all by herself, 'down the hillside, on the stones of the water-course where washermen wash the clothes'

In passages like these Kipling appears as a true successor to Thackeray. He possesses the same cynicism, the same pathos, and the same gift of great writing. Thackeray and Kipling, both sons of Anglo-Indian parents, and born in India, show a striking resemblance in their art.

Another passage illustrative of Kipling's pathos is found in *The Story of Muhammad Din*—one of the best stories of the Indian group. It is good because Kipling loved Imam Din, his khitmatgar, and children. He daily saw the little child, Muhammad Din, who played in the back portion of his bungalow, and kindly responded to his daily greeting. He had become so used to this daily greeting that the absence of Muhammad Din worried him.

'A week later, though I would have given much to have avoided it, I met on the road to the Mussalman burying-ground Imam Din, accompanied by one other friend, carrying in his arms, wrapped in a white cloth, all that was left of little Muhammad Din.'

Another good story is *Without Benefit of Clergy*. It is a longer tale. John Holden loves a Mussalman's daughter, Ameera. He bought her from her mother, 'who would have sold Ameera shrieking to the Prince of Darkness if the price had been sufficient'. A sordid business, but Ameera soon became the centre of John Holden's life, and it is with fear for Ameera that he looks forward to the birth of his baby. When the little baby-hand for the first time closed feebly on his finger, 'the clutch ran through his body till it settled about his heart'. The little mother is devoted to Holden and to her baby, in whom she sees

an indissoluble bond of affection between herself and her lord Their happiness however does not last long Tota the baby dies and then comes cholera Ameera following the example of *mem log* might have consented to go to the hills had Tota lived but after his death she sees her duty by the side of the man who is not only her husband, but the desire of my soul to me'

My lord and my love' she says, let there be no more foolish talk of going away Where thou art I am It is enough

Ameera dies of cholera Kipling's description of the ravages of the epidemic is masterly

Nature began to audit her accounts with a red pencil and it was a red and heavy audit

The story idealizes a romantic episode of love between East and West and one wishes that the cheap journalistic satire (at the expense of the Member for Tooting) had been left out of it Satire and cynicism are out of place in such a perfect idyll of love and death Ameera was sold for money but her love for Holden transmutes the sordid transaction into something noble The sight of the ugly old hag making an inventory of the furniture that will fall to her lot while her daughter's corpse is crying for burial is as shocking as the scene of the death of Sir Pitt Crawley

20 *Kim* and *The Naulahka*

No treatment of Kipling as a writer of Indian stories would be complete without an examination of *Kim* and *The Naulahka* These novels may be so called because each covers more than four hundred pages Mr Edward Farley Oaten would even go so far as to say that to call it [*Kim*] a work of fiction is a little misleading¹ He regards it as 'the greatest masterpiece of journalism by the greatest living journalist On the other hand Mr Thurston Hopkins speaks of *Kim* as a tremendous Indian

¹ *Anglo Indian Literature* p 185

Novel',¹ tremendous because it is 'surcharged with magic and fetichism of the East', and bristles with 'native erudition and folk-lore' *Kim* cannot be dismissed as journalism. It is a work of high art. But so far as the 'magic of the East' is concerned, there is not more of it in *Kim* than in Kipling's other stories dealing with India, if the magic of the East is taken to mean real and normal India. Both *Kim* and the Lama, the chief characters in the story, are not Indians at all. *Kim*'s father was an Irish soldier, perhaps of the same stock to which Mulvancy belonged. His mother was a nurse-maid in a Colonel's family, with whom the half-caste opium-eating woman, who had brought him up, claimed the privilege of a sister. As an orphaned half-caste, *Kim* wanders in the streets of Lahore, and has special opportunities of learning the native language and of becoming familiar with scenes and places unknown to Englishmen in India. In his precocious sharpness he is the half-brother of Becky Sharp, moreover he was brought up in the same school of poverty as Becky. But in spite of his stealthy prowls through the dark gullies and lanes of Lahore, his knowledge of India is confined to the 'Ajaib Ghur', the serais, the scenes and sights on the roads, cantonments of British soldiers, a Eurasian school, the house of Huneefa in Lucknow, a curio-dealer's shop in Simla, and the hills where he wandered in the Secret Service. Such experiences are not enough to give him a knowledge of real India. *Kim*'s India, in spite of its picturesqueness, is the superficial India as an outsider sees it.

An examination of Kipling's other characters discloses the range of Kipling. In *Kim* we see the clever but unscrupulous border Pathan, Mahbub Ali of the Secret Service, who drinks brandy against the law of the Prophet and pursues 'the Flower of Delight with the feet of intoxication' in the gate of Harpies, the old Sikh Rissaldar, who had been in nineteen pitched battles and who is fond

¹ *Rudyard Kipling, A Survey of His Art*, p. 107

of singing the song of Nikal Sevn before Delhi the spruce scribe the young Kayeth letter writer of Umballa who writes a letter to Mahbub Ali on a promise of double payment Colonel Creighton of the Survey Department who takes a keen interest in the education of Kim the wonderful Lurgan Sahib of Simla, who heals sick pearls the talkative Babu Hurree Chunder Mookerjee, heavy haunched bull necked and an M A of Calcutta University whose life's ambition was to be able to write F R S after his name, the simple Jat from Jandirala the bruised Mahratta E 23 of the Secret Service whom Kim helps to become a sadhu, and many other persons who do not play any part either in the Game or the Quest but appear and disappear like figures on the screen

4.1 *Kipling's limitations*

In spite of the variety and range of Kipling's characters and scenes, in spite of his great descriptive power, keen observation and vivid imagination the soul of India remains hidden from his eyes. What Kipling saw and understood he has reproduced cleverly what he loved he has recreated with the skill and vigour of an imaginative artist. But Kipling's range of observation like that of most other Anglo Indian writers, was limited to what could be seen on the surface. The heat of the plains in summer, scenes on a railway platform life in a Roman Catholic School or people jostling one another in crowded bazaars of a city like Benares do not however make the whole of India.

Kipling has caught and reproduced the picturesqueness of India, but he is more conscious of her inherent rottenness. India has 'the merit of being two thirds sham, looking pretty on paper only'. He is painfully conscious of the want of atmosphere in the painter's sense. There are no half tints worth noticing. Men stand out all crude and raw with nothing to tone them down and nothing to

scale them against' ¹ India is a place beyond all others where one must not take things too seriously—the mid-day sun always excepted ² Kipling himself did not take India seriously. In *By Word of Mouth* he says that it is best to know nothing. Unlike the Law Member of the Viceroy's Council, he knows that no one can tell what the natives think unless one mixes with them 'with the varnish off'.³ Kipling seems to have made some efforts to understand India with the varnish off. He visited the house of Suddhoo near Taxali Gate, he talked with Janoo and Azizun, the ladies of the city, in the recess of carved bow windows, he visited the chandoo-khanas between the Coppersmith's gully and the pipe-stem seller's quarters, he cultivated the society of Gobind in the Chubara of Dhunni Bhagat, and of *faqirs, sadhus, sunmyasis, byragis, mhangs, and mullabs*, he took interest in the intrigues of the sleek and shiny young men of fashion for whom Kim executed commissions. But all this is not enough to understand India. It is like trying to understand Europe from its night clubs, music halls, and Latin or Chinese quarters.

22 *Kipling's knowledge of Indian women*

Kipling's failure to lift the veil that hides real India from the eye of the foreigner is evident from his treatment of the women of India. With the exception of the old woman from Kulu, there is no respectable Indian woman in any of his stories or novels. In *The Naulahka* he has given us a conventional account of the palace of the Maharajah of Gokral Seetarun—'a vast warren with its lonely chambers where the wind sighed alone under the glittering ceilings', where 'the terrible fierce-eyed girls leapt out of the dark'. Sitabhai is a gipsy girl, sentenced to death, who is pardoned by the Maharajah, and made one of his three hundred queens. She lulls the opium-eating

¹ *On the Strength of a Likeness*

² *Thrown Away*

³ *Tods' Amendment*

Maharajah to sleep with songs and endearments while she is hatching a plot to poison his son the Maharaj Kunwar. With remarkable frankness she tells Tarvin Sahib that she had attempted to kill him though she likes him, and that as a girl she had danced on the slack rope before the mess tents of military officers. Tarvin admires her picturesque and systematic deviltry and unconsciously slips an arm around her waist and possibly shares her longing for the old times when Englishmen of no birth stole the hearts of begums and led their armies. In all this we see an ambitious, unscrupulous gipsy girl, but no genuine Indian Queen. The only other Indian woman in *The Naulahka* is a woman of the desert and a nonentity who remains faithful to the white fairy Miss Kate Sherif after her hospital is broken up. Kipling apparently knew very little about the place of a woman in a respectable Indian home: he knows and emphasizes peculiar types which are more fictitious than real. Ameera—who is sold to Holden Unda, the unfaithful wife of Janki Meah in *At Twenty Two*, Azizun and Janoo of Taxali gate ladies of the city and members of the ancient profession, more or less honourable, the Bazaar woman having plenty of money who visits the opium den in the gate of the Hundred Sorrows, the big, blind old Huneefa who knows *Jadoo*, the Flower of Delight who robs Mahbub Ali, Lalun, also referred to as belonging to the most ancient profession in the world, her maid Nasibin, Bisesa, the youthful Hindu widow who listens to the love songs of Trejago and encourages his advances, the Amritsar girl who laughs at the money lender and flirts with the Dogra soldier in the train, the Hindu widow for whose love the ford keeper on the Barhwi swims across the river, the Woman of Shamlegh with two husbands who makes love to Kim, and lastly the old lady of Kulu who is a principal character in *Kim* and the only woman who rises a little above ladies of questionable honour or low caste intriguing widows. The old lady of Kulu is a woman of the hills.

who smokes and is not representative of her sisters of the plains. In spite of her wealth and position, she is no better than a bazaar woman in her tastes. She is supposed to travel in purdah, but at the jokes of the 'nut-cut' police-wallah she discards her veil and is pleased to be addressed as 'a Moon of Paradise, a Disturber of Integrity'. Does she represent Indian womanhood?

Kipling's merits as an artist are great. He occupies an immortal place in the history of English literature, both as a poet and a story-teller. His portraiture of English and Anglo-Indian life and character has won universal approbation. But our examination of his Indian stories does not show that he has been more successful in coming nearer the soul of India than most of his countrymen.

CHAPTER IV

RUDYARD KIPLING AND HIS SCHOOL

23 *Influence of Kipling on short story writers*

RUDYARD KIPLING has been a force in the history of Anglo Indian fiction. Much of what has been written since the publication of his Indian stories and especially *Kim* (1901) has directly and indirectly been influenced by Kipling. Before Kipling Anglo Indian fiction was amorphous. It had no distinctive place in the history of English literature. Its recognition is due to Kipling. Kipling disclosed to the European world a vast field for the exercise of creative art. His genius, art and popularity produced a host of admirers and imitators. Stories soon appeared in large numbers of Indian life and customs, of English life in India, of the clash of East and West, and of the mystery of an ancient country teeming with millions of inhabitants.

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The mere fact of a handful of Englishmen ruling over the destinies of millions was staggering. That Englishmen and Englishwomen who came out to India thought highly of themselves and of the natives with contempt can be easily comprehended. They made money in India, enjoyed themselves mightily and abused India heartily. At the same time they never ceased to regard themselves as exiles who had made enormous sacrifices for the good of the natives.

That hoard and sleep and feed and know not me

These feelings of racial arrogance, of contempt for India and Indians, and of melancholy engendered by separation from home are the common subjects of Kipling's poems and stories and of those who followed him.

24 *Mrs. Flora Annie Steel*

Among the many writers who came under the spell of Kipling, Mrs. Flora Annie Steel is the earliest. When in the 'nineties her stories began to appear it was a commonplace of criticism to compare her with Kipling. Like his, her romances mainly deal with Anglo-Indian life, but Indian life is not ignored. In her outlook and method of treatment she resembles Kipling. But her range is greater. While Kipling wrote his stories to fill a few columns of an Anglo-Indian daily, she planned them more deliberately and on a larger scale. But her acquaintance with Anglo-Indian life and the life of official Simla is poor in comparison with the intimate knowledge of Kipling. Her only Anglo-Indian character that compares favourably with Kipling's creations is Mrs. Boynton of *The Potter's Thumb* (1894), the evil woman *par excellence*. The rest are mere types. But she has more sympathy for the men and women of the Punjab. Her novels are long and heavy. They move slowly and are encumbered with matters extraneous to the story. *Voices in the Night* (1900) and the *Hosts of the Lord* (1900) are bulky volumes with very simple plots. It is in her short stories that Mrs. Steel is to be seen at her best and recalls Kipling. *The Permanent Way and Other Stories* (1897) is a valuable contribution to Anglo-Indian literature. *At the Grand Dmbar* and *The Blue-throated God* are specially interesting. They do not show much mastery over character, but exhibit a knowledge of Hindu and Mohammedan life and thought more intimate than that of Kipling. It is curious to note that according to Mrs. Steel some of these stories, *The Permanent Way*, *The King's Well*, and *The Most Nailin' Bad Shot*, have a spiritist origin. They are supposed to have been dictated to her by 'Nathaniel James Craddock', a guard on the Great Peninsular Railway, of whom Mrs. Steel has no recollection.¹ *From the Five Rivers* (1893), an earlier

¹ *The Garden of Fidelity*

of meanness to a cynical vein *Ganesh* () the ignorance super-illagers As a work of art it is crude *Ganesh Chund* is painted with feeling but his mother and his wife Veru are not pleasing creations *The Blue Monkey* is a burlesque of a cowardly money lending Hindu and his educated son *In the Guardianship of God* (1903) contains seventeen studies full of pathos of Hindu character Mrs Steel like Kipling cannot understand educated India or even rural India Both of them however can understand the devotion and fidelity of the servants and menials who serve them and live within their compounds *Little Henry and His Bearer* is reminiscent of Mrs Sherwood's story of the same name if not a copy and depicts the devotion of a thug for an English child *The Perfume of the Rose* is also a story of a loyal Indian in the days of the Mutiny *The Reformer's Wife* which gives a sketch of the westernized Hindu is not so convincing and betrays the author's bias The more prominent note of Mrs Steel's books is the feeling of sadness evoked by the recollections of the Mutiny She has visualized that crisis in her novel *On the Face of the Waters* (1896) and its echoes are heard also in her other books An extract taken from *Voices in the Night* is given below

As they did so a plaintive woman's voice rose close to her I shall send baby home as we've been transferred to Cawnpore

Isn't she rather young? said some one in answer

Oh! it isn't *that* replied the first voice I mean that I couldn't take a child to Cawnpore I should always be thinking of the well

Always thinking of the well!

The words brought home to Iesley Drummond in an instant—a never to be forgotten instant—that *something* which so often chills the golden glory of the Eastern sunshine that vision of the sentinel of memory which for both races bars the door of reconciliation that might otherwise stand open for comradeship (p 10)

25 *Mrs Alice Perrin.*

Another writer who shows the influence of Kipling is Mrs Alice Perrin. She has written many novels of Anglo-Indian life and three volumes of short stories. She does not show the same knowledge of native life as Mrs Steel, but what little she knows of Indian life, she utilizes with considerable skill as a background for novels of Anglo-Indian life. Being the wife of an engineer, she knows the mofussil more than the gay life of a provincial capital or of a hill station. Her first volume of short stories, *East of Suez*, was published in 1901, the year of the publication of *Kim*. Like Kipling, Mrs Perrin is quite familiar with the life of Englishmen east of Suez and her presentation of it, at least in her first book, is similar to that of Kipling. Her observation is accurate and her understanding clear. But she does not possess Kipling's gift of literary craftsmanship. She lacks the satire, fun, and irony which distinguish Kipling's tales. *East of Suez* is more in the style of Kipling than *Rough Passages* (1926) and *Red Records* (1928). These latter were published recently, but they describe the days when motor-cars were unknown and English officials moved from place to place in *ekkas* and bullock-carts. The very title-page of *East of Suez* is a tribute to Kipling and bears his famous lines

Ship me somewhere East of Suez
Where the best is like the worst,
Where there aren't no Ten Commandments
An' a man can raise a thirst

Out of the fourteen stories of this volume, *Beynon, of the Irrigation Department*, *The Tiger Charm*, and *A Perverted Punishment* are stories of unhappy married life in India. *The Fakir of the Forest*, *A Planter's Wife*, and *The Spell*, in *Rough Passages*, deal with the same subject. Mrs Perrin's men and women go wrong but with trepidation. They do not flout the Ten Commandments like Kipling's characters. Her tragedies are enacted in out-of-the-way

places in remote camps jungles or on lonely river banks, and do not give rise to scandals Mrs Perrin's women are weak but not deliberately wicked She has no Mrs Hauksbee or Mrs Boynton

Another respect in which Mrs Perrin resembles Kipling is her interest in the occult and the mysterious She records its influence on the life of her countrymen in the East All the three volumes contain stories based on native beliefs in the evil eye ghosts and superstitions In *The Summoning of Arnold* she describes with pathos the tragic death of a loving husband in India just at the moment when his wife died on the operating table in England *Caulfield's Crime* and *The Fakir's Island* relate the terrible consequences of insulting Indian sadhus and fakirs *Red Records* contains as many as seven stories of the same type *The Momiai Walla Sahib* has for its theme the strange belief that Englishmen kill well fed native lads to manufacture momiai *The Evil Eye* is a terrible story worked round the superstition that a leper father or mother must be buried alive if the children are to escape the disease Moore *The Packet of Letters* and *The Footsteps in the Dust* are stories based on a belief in spirits *The Brahminy Bull* in *Rough Passages* is set in the eerie atmosphere of re-incarnation *The Belief of Bhagnan Bearer Chumiah Ayah* and *The Biscobra* are tragic stories of superstition vindictiveness and devotion of Indian servants *The Spell* narrates how Ganga a servant serves his master by saving his mistress from falling into temptation *Rough Passages* has a few other stories suggestive of Kipling *For India* describes the disillusionment of a rich English lady tourist who, like Paget M P had come out to investigate the wrongs of the British administration in India but found the much maligned officials devoted to the welfare of the masses Mrs Perrin's powers are seen at their best in some of these stories Between the publication of *East of Suez* in 1901 and *Red Records* in 1928, Mrs Perrin wrote a number of novels dealing with various

phases of Anglo-Indian life, which show the same sympathy, the same power of observation, and vivid description as her shorter stories.

26. *Otto Rothfeld and 'Andrul'*

Indian Dust (1909) by Mr Otto Rothfeld and *The Wayside* (1911) by 'Andrul' are two other volumes of short stories reminding us of Kipling. Mr Rothfeld takes us to Rajputana, a province left unexplored by Kipling, if we except *The Naulahka*. He narrates some extraordinary tales of Rajput customs, character, and life of older days. *The Crime of Narsingji* describes the fidelity and devotion of a Rajput servant to his master, his pride of birth, simplicity and courage. *A Rajput Lady* is a spirited story of a Rajput woman who wins her husband like a modern European girl, and takes one back to the days of Rajput chivalry. *On Thy Head* recounts how a Rajput Bhat brought back a Rajput prince to his ancestral home by threatening to kill himself, and he would have sacrificed himself too according to the ancient custom if the prince had refused to return. *Behind the Purdah* is a tragic but crude tale of the unhappy marriage of a Rajput Princess, and her ambition which led to dishonour and murder. *In the Twilight* traces the effects of Oxford education on a young Mohammedan student and the discontent that overtakes him. Mr Rothfeld has little technique. He is at his best when describing Rajput life or Bhil customs. Most of these stories first appeared in *The Times of India*.

'Andrul' reminds the reader forcibly of Kipling and his tales. His stories also first appeared in *The Times of India* and *The Pioneer*. In the Introduction to the book, which bears a close resemblance to Kipling's Preface to *Life's Handicap*, 'Andrul' tells us how he came to write these stories. The stories are full of real affection for the masses of India, to whom the book is dedicated. His object is to gain for them a little sympathy. The masses of India, he tells us,

are happy in their own simple way but their happinesses are so trivial their joys so primitive that they would be of little interest for the contemplation of Western folk. On the other hand their sadnesses are greater to the more civilised mind than to themselves who are unaccustomed to perceive the pathos of life. Hence these sketches are mostly sad (p 4)

Kipling wrote the tales of his own people and wrote for the amusement of his own people. What pictures of humble Indian life he gives are often spoilt by the indifference, even contempt, which characterizes his study of Indians. Andrul's object as we have seen was different. His stories are for that reason more faithful pictures of humble Indian life.

His first story *The Toys of Ghulam Muhiyuddin* is an echo of Kipling's famous story of *Muhammad Din*.

I wanted to see the little body before it was taken away. I wish I had not. (Andrul p 10)

A week later though I would have given much to have avoided it I met on the road to the Mussalman burying ground Imam Din accompanied by one other friend carrying in his arms wrapped in a white cloth all that was left of little Muhammad Din. (Kipling's *Tales* p 301)

The same note is struck by both writers there is the same tragedy and the same effect. Both writers refer to the little resistance which Indians offer to the inroads of disease and their stoical indifference in the face of death. But Andrul lacks the art of Kipling. Kipling's love for the private in English regiments in India shows itself in many stories. 'Andrul loves the native soldier quite as much and has reproduced the pathos of his humble life in several simple tales. *The Izrat of Hira Singh*, *The Debts of Harkarn Singh*, *The Madness of Knaja Muhammad Khan*, *The Igrominy of Chandka Singh*, *The Lored of God—and Incidentally of Women*, evince a remarkable grasp of the Indian soldier's character, especially the Sikh soldier and the Pathan. Andrul is very sensitive to the tragedy of their humble lives knows the peculiarities of their character

and realizes their essential humanity. He is not at his best when dealing with characters like Gulzarī Lal Mīr, M A. He belongs to the type of Englishmen who, a generation ago, could not tolerate the idea of *swadeshi* and even 'covert' talks about *swaraj*. Like Kipling, he understands his servants and has recorded their infinite patience, their devotion to their master, their affection for wife and children and their love for their regiments. *The Abandonment of Tashi* relates the sacrifice of a poor shikarī to save his wife and child from death by starvation. *The Patience of Pitamber* is a touching record of the tender devotion of a servant to his paralytic wife and to his master who returns from furlough only when it is too late. *The Passing of Janki* and *Reprieved* show how these humble Indians touch the heart of their masters. *Reprieved* is one of the best stories in the volume and narrates how the wife of a sweeper, brutally treated by her husband, still interceded for her man when he got into trouble, and was transported with delight when he was reprieved by the commandant. The author thus describes the happy end of this incident:

'I looked at the Colonel, and saw a suspicious moisture in his eye. I looked at the second-in-command, who was scowling heavily and clearing his throat with unnecessary violence, and somehow I reckoned them none the less men for their weakness.

'I tried to say that the man who had used the phrase "passing even the love of woman" knew how to express the superlative, but my voice behaved so funnily over the first word that I kept silence' (*The Wayside*, pp 76-7)

'Andrul' had promised the dying Ahir (in the Preface) that he would tell his countrymen what he had heard and seen by the wayside. The book shows how well and faithfully he has fulfilled his promise. Our only regret is that he did not write more.

27 *Edmund Candler.*

Another writer of merit but in marked contrast to 'Andrul' both in temper and style is Mr Edmund Candler.

The General Plan (1911) is a book of nine well written short stories. In his contempt for Indians and things Indian, his admiration of the courage and character of English officials in India, and his literary style, he is a follower of Kipling. In *Probationary* Lord Masfield gives a characteristic piece of advice to Dick before his departure for India.

Keep the natives in their place my boy. They will think all the more of you for it. And never trust any of them further than you can help. (p. 18)

There is an echo of the *Head of the District* in the following passage in Mr. Candler's best vein.

The assistant magistrate was a young Bengali of the hybrid Cambridge type with the veneer fast wearing off—a prig preternaturally fat and a bundle of touchiness. He welcomed Dick with disconcerting familiarity, adopting the spurious air which sits as well on arecrow. Dick drew back, leered instantly into one of injured alootness. His lounge became a strut, his exaggerated contours seemed to be tortured into angles, the nape of his neck stiffened with an awkward dignity which his shifty eyes could not support as he waved a fat palm at Dick, addressing him with insinuating patronage. (p. 24)

The story is meant to show the contrast in the character of an Indian and an English official. Mr. Candler's language is particularly vigorous and incisive when he is describing anything Indian.

The accident of Dick's presence alone had disturbed the black ooze of undredged wickedness and intrigue that had collected in the stagnant backwater of Kordinghee. (p. 58)

A Break in the Rains with its description of Gerard's encounter with an Aghori breathing corruption is a variation of Kipling's *The Mark of the Beast* and shows Mr. Candler's love for the eerie and mysterious in Indian life. *The Testimony of Bhagnan Singh* based upon the tragic

love of a Sikh youth for Parbatī, the beautiful wife of a goldsmith, shows the author's love for the supernatural. In his appreciation of the natural scenery of the Himalayas, and of Lamas living in their lonely monasteries there, Mr Candler resembles Kipling. *At Galdang Tso* is autobiographical in some respects. Mr Candler has put something of himself in Hugh.

'He left the University with nothing to fall back upon except a Third in the Classical Tripos, some vague literary leanings, and a great love for the poetry of Browning and Keats, gifts which were tempered with a longing to be away, to dwell in tents under the shadow of Lebanon, to cross Africa, or camp on the roof of the world. Instead, he became a school-master' (p. 226)

'His longing for the East was a passion' (p. 227)

'The fragrance of a pine wood fire and the smell of his pony's warm coat stirred vague longings in Hugh' (p. 227)

His description of the journey from Kalka to Simla, from Simla to Kotgarh, Nachar, Warytu, Chini, Dankar and thence to Galdang Tso is one of the best pieces of Anglo-Indian prose, recalling Kipling's description of the Grand Trunk Road. Hugh's impressions of Simla, which he regarded as a mere caravanserai on his way to Galdang Tso, deserve reproduction.

'He made Simla on the third day in a march of twenty-four miles through bleak hills. The lamps were lit on the mall when he pressed his tired pony up from Jutogh, and he passed officialdom spinning home in their rickshaws, lofty, remote, imperturbable, as he had read of them, and their scarlet-coated *chaprassies* with files and folios, brown paper, and red tape.'

'The place depressed him as it had his brother, who had found the migratory society there the most artificial in the world. He described it as made up of "burra-crats" and birds of passage waiting on the doorstep for appointments and flying off with crumbs. He felt as if he were moving through invisible steel hinges. Many new faces passed every day, faces that resented other faces, and seemed to shrink from the obliga-

tions involved in any new tie The people in the hotel greeted one another at meals as who should say 'Good morning damn you' (p. 229)

28 *Sir Edmund Cox, Herbert Sherring Richard Dehan, Ethel M. Dell, A. T. Marris and John Eytton*

With a very few exceptions, for other story tellers a passing notice is sufficient Sir Edmund Cox in his three books *John Carruthers* (1905) *The Achievements of John Carruthers* (1911) *The Exploits of Kesho Nask Dacost* (1912) has given a literary shape to his long experience of the Indian Police Service and has turned his knowledge into delightful and powerful stories His delineation of Indian Police methods in every detail of their crooked intricacy is tinged with gentle satire and characterized by humour Mr Herbert Sherring in *Gopi* (1911) takes the readers to many places and periods for his themes *Gopi* is the first and longest story in the book dealing with modern India

Richard Dehan's *Earth to Earth* (1916) is a volume of mixed stories of London and India The best of all in conception and art is *A Nursery Tea* Of the five stories which make up *The Safety Curtain and other Stories* (1917) by Miss Ethel M. Dell two deal mainly with Indian scenes They show minute knowledge of military life in India and are superior to the other three *The Safety Curtain* is remarkable for the sketch of fascinating and irresponsible Puck who is saved by Major Meryon from certain death Major Meryon belongs to the class of strong stolid male heroes of woman novelists *Through Eastern Windows* (1919) by Mr A. T. Marris is a Religious Tract Society publication Mr Marris undertakes to explain in these stories not only the joys and anxieties of Indian daily life but

Something also of the struggles and failures the victories and the ideals of that underlying thought life which is the most real thing in each one of us whether Indian or English (Dedication)

In spite of natural missionary bias and propagandist aim

with which all of them are coloured, the stories evince a real understanding of the life of Indians in the bazaars and the zenana. Major-General T. P. Pilcher possesses some gifts of literary style and uses them in his book *East is East* (1921). His delineation of Indian life and character is prejudiced, his aim being merely to show that East is East. Similar is the aim of Mr. Leonard Woolf in his *Stories of the East* (1921), one of his three stories is a variant of the failure of mixed marriages. The scene is laid in Colombo.

Mr. John Eyton is a more important writer of short stories dealing with recent times. His object may be judged from the last stanza of a poem of his own, in his book, *The Dancing Fakir* (1922).

If you would gather pictures of a land that never changes—
Where Brahmans, though three thousand years have
passed, are Brahmans still
From sunny Coromandel coast unto the Northern ranges—
Then come as I would guide you, and see history from a
hill

Mr. Eyton is a much travelled man and knows his India from Sunny Coromandel to the Northern Ranges. His first story, *The Dancing Fakir*, takes us to the Ramlila fair at Bijapur where Babu Gopi Nath, the friend of 'Mahatma Gandhi Ji' of whom the Sirdar is afraid, makes a speech inciting the mob to proceed to the 'Hotel-Club' to shed the 'blood of the English dogs'. The Dancing Fakir, who is none else than the loafing, drinking jail-bird, Jackson of the Calcutta racecourse and music-halls, saves the Government Treasury and the small colony of Englishmen and women at Bijapur by a heroic deed of self-sacrifice. The story is typical of the Anglo-Indian attitude towards the Non-Co-operation Movement. The second story, *The Heart of Tek Chand*, takes us to Rohtak District, near Delhi, and then to the Western Front. It deals with the romance of Tek Chand with the slim daughter of Perbhoo Dyal, but it is specially noteworthy as recording the impressions of an Indian soldier of his first sight of

the sea of ships and of French towns and villages. As the Indian troops marched up from the docks through the town of Marseilles Tek Chand thought that the world was marvellously full of sights.

Girls—smiling and speaking in a strange tongue—waved at them, walked along beside them, kissed their hands to them, actually shook the hand of one or two. This was very strange to Tek Chand, in whose eyes a handshake from a saheb was an honour reserved for the great. (p. 18)

The Moods of Saleem takes us to the border of Derm Ismail Khan and describes the deeds of Saleem, a notorious leader of a band of raiders, who combined the qualities of the knight errant, the fanatic, the humorist, and the idealist. Some of the stories, such as *The Ugly Calf*, *A Philosopher Stag*, *The Pale Ore*, are reminiscent of Kipling's *Just-So Books*.

Mr. C. A. Kincaid has won some reputation as a writer of stories of Hindu life and religion. *Sri Krishna of Dwarka and other stories*, *Tales of Tulsi*, *Plur and other studies* (1922) illustrate Mr. Kincaid's intimate and sympathetic delineation of Hindus of southern India.

29. *Afghan*

Afghan, whose knowledge of Pathan life is full of sympathy and acute observation, turns his attention to India in his volume of short stories, *The Best Indian Chutney* (1925). Afghan tells us that he has sweetened the *Chutney*, but it must be confessed that it still leaves a bitter taste in the mouth. Afghan has a sense of humour, and the gift of character painting. But in this book his humour often degenerates into vulgarity and his character sketches into caricatures. His knowledge of Indians, whom he misrepresents, seems meagre. What he sees he can transcribe, but when it comes to interpreting actions he flounders. The story *There's Many a Ship* is a good illustration. It is based upon his assump-

tion that a Hindu cannot have more than one wife at a time, and therefore it is necessary for Arjun Dass, the fat, greasy, and amorous *bumrah*, to become a Mussulman. *Hukam Chand* is a comedy of the jealousy and amours of a Hindu clerk Kishan Singh, the hero of the story of the same name, is described as taking no interest in dancing girls 'because he had a nice taste and tainted game did not appeal to him. He preferred to bag his own shikar'. *Bertie's Sister* is a dark picture of Eurasian snobbishness and degradation. *The Holy Pir* is a travesty of Moham-medan life. *The Non-Co-operator* is a political skit. Prem Chand is described as a lying, cowardly follower of Gandhi. He has two mistresses in a bazaar where ladies of easy virtue reside,² and many more friends. He wears khaddai, but secretly despises it. He is a 'positive genius' in inflaming the passions of the ignorant folk. He enlists followers by threatening to loot the houses of those who refuse and by allowing his followers to take liberties with pretty girls. When he has to invest his ill-gotten wealth, he puts it in an English bank because Indian banks had a 'disagreeable habit' of failing unexpectedly. After the resignation by Mr. Montagu of the office of Secretary of State for India and the arrest of Gandhi, he gives up Non-Co-operation and saves his skin by disclosing the name of every man in his gang and all the robberies committed by them. The sketch of Prem Chand is only worthy of notice as enabling the reader to know how 'Afghan' wants his countrymen to visualize a Non-Co-operator. *His English Wife* is a shorter version of Mr. John Eyton's novel entitled *Mr. Ram*, which appeared later. The two stories which are free from bitterness and bias, and show that 'Afghan' can write feelingly when he wishes, are *The Old Rest House* and *The Sadhu's Gift*. The first is a pathetic tale of an English child brought up among wolves, the second describes the horrible end of an Englishman who had offended an Indian sadhu, a

story similar to *The Mark of the Beast* in substance, but ending tragically

30 *The Ranee of Sarawak Maud Diver, and Mrs Savi*

Her Highness the Ranee of Sarawak endeavours to portray in her *Cauldron* the degenerating influence of the Far East on white men and women. The stories are not Indian but depict Malay life and take the readers to a land of gorgeous green, and fruit and large lazy flowers beneath which the damp rot is eating its destructive way.¹ The author finds in the native legends loneliness and the power of suggestion some of the weapons of destruction that the Far East uses against Europeans.² *Five Indian Tales* by Mr F F Shearwood consists of artless stories written by a zealous missionary in India who died at the early age of thirty seven. *De Profundis* a tale describing how a missionary risked his life to nurse an Indian leper despised and ignored by his own community is typical of the collection. Mrs Maud Diver's *Siege Perilous* (1924) and Mrs Savi's two volumes of short stories *Back o' Beyond* and *The Saving of a Scandal* are by products of their literary industry as novelists. Mrs Maud Diver's book contains some quite good stories. *Siege Perilous* is the longest story in the collection and bears a certain cousinship with the principal characters of her last novel, *Ships of Youth*. The habit of Mrs Diver of reintroducing the same family characters is illustrated even in *Ships of Youth* published in 1931. Readers who are not familiar with her previous novels may find her later productions less enjoyable for that reason. The scene of the story is the hill station of Dalhousie and the plot is the triangular clash of love. *Light Marching Order* is a humorous story of the Second Afghan War and narrates how a soda water machine was smuggled into the camp against orders. *Lakshmi The Gods of the East* and *Escape* are Indian stories taken from life as Mrs Diver herself tells us in the

¹ Foreword

² Ibid

Author's Note. *Lakshmi* closely resembles Mr Rothfeld's *A Rajput Princess*, only *Lakshmi* belongs to a later period. *The Gods of the East* is introduced with a quotation from Kipling and is based on the ancient Hindu practice of enforcing the payment of a debt by sitting *Dharna*, now punishable by law. Ram Singh, however, defies the law and stoically accepts the sentence of transportation for life. This story also resembles Mr Rothfeld's story entitled *On Thy Head*. *Sunia* irresistibly reminds one of Kipling's *Lispeth*; even some of the sentences are echoes of Kipling:

'When a Hill girl is beautiful you will scarce find her match in the five continents, and Sunia was beautiful past question' (*Siege Perilous*, p. 152)

'When a Hill-girl grows lovely, she is worth travelling fifty miles over bad ground to look upon. Lispeth had a Greek face—one of those faces people paint so often, and see so seldom' (*Plain Tales*, p. 2)

Escape is a simple romance of a pretty girl-widow of Luliana and Gopalu, her lover. Mrs. Diver, however, does not know that girls, much less widows, in the Panjab villages have no *pan-dan*.

Mrs Savi's stories, like her novels, have no marked features. In *Back o' Beyond*, the stories are of Anglo-Indian life, based upon the belief in the unlucky thirteen and tragedies of misplaced affection. *Worse Than Death* tells us how the beautiful Flossie went mad after being confined for five days in a dry well. *The Saving of a Scandal* contains a few stories with Indian characters. *The Orderly* relates how a Pathan orderly atones for his projected treachery. *Brute Force* shows the regenerating influence of love for an English married girl on a Pathan Prince. The Prince starts with the determination to murder her husband and kidnap her, but returns after presenting a garland of puceless pearls to her baby. *A Legend of Hindustan* (in verse) is a homily on marriages of innocent English girls to degenerate nawabs and rajahs. *White*

Lies is a mystery novel centring round the death of Compton Low whose body like that of Imray is found exposed from the ceiling. Even the karait is not missing.

31 *Hilton Brown*

Mr Hilton Brown in *Potter's Clay* (1927) has collected some stories of South India. The Potter bears testimony to the richness and abundance of the clay and leaves his readers to judge the Potter for themselves. The South Indian clay in the hands of a practised artist like Mr Hilton Brown has taken beautiful forms tinged with his delicate satire and irony. These tales as he says are passing comments on one of the most puzzling peoples and one of the least classable countries for which Creation has ever been responsible. Mr Brown bows before this ununderstandable India its infinite contradictions and contrarities and closes the volume with a poem on Mother India called *Envoi*. Two stanzas are reproduced below.

Take the worst conundrums known
 Since this world began revolving
 Add whate'er hath Science shown
 Hopeless and beyond all solving
 Multiply the mass by three
 Mix their heads and tails and middles—
 We shall have a glumpse of Thee
 Mother India asking riddles
 Riddles riddles riddles riddles
 Quite unanswerable riddles
 Unto all eternity

In his style Mr Brown seems to imitate Kipling of the *Plain Tales*. *Genius* is a skit on the Indians' fondness for law and it is meant to endorse Professor Pickling's view that it is practically impossible for a genius to arise in this country.

32 *Miss Mayo, Mrs Beck and Mr Humfrey Jordan*

It is this inability to understand the many-sidedness of Indian life and thought, so puzzling to the Western mind

that has turned a writer of Miss Mayo's undoubted literary gifts into a propagandist. Miss Katherine Mayo showed in *Maggot to Man* that if she chose she could write in a spirit of detachment. But her habit of making sweeping generalizations and her propagandist tendencies disfigure her stories of Hindu widows and girl-wives included in the *Slaves of Gods* (1929). Mrs L. Adams Beck understands India better than Miss Mayo, for she loves India, though it may be for India's mystery and mysticism. She often soars among the clouds, but the stories included in *The Ninth Vibration and Other Stories* (1928) are distinctly superior to Miss Mayo's productions, not only because of her greater literary gifts, but by broader sympathies. Mr. Humfrey Jordan in his *White Masters* (1929) takes the reader to the jungles, swamps, and creeks of Burma, and shows, like the Rance of Sarawak, 'the sinister influence of the East' on the lives of white men and women. He tells us how in the lonely bungalows and clubs of Sin Byu 'lives are constricted, nerves exasperated, the pettiness of human nature intensified' (T L S, Dec 5, 1929.)

33 *Kipling and his imitators*

Kipling's influence is shown not only by the more important short-story writers but by several novelists of note. Some imitate him slavishly, others copy him with discretion. A few mark a reaction against him.

Among the imitators of Kipling are Talbot Mundy, 'Ganpat', and Alice Eustace.

Talbot Mundy shows the influence of Kipling both in the substance of his stories and style. *King, of the Khyber Rifles* (1927) is a mingling of the plots of *Kim* and *The Naulahka*. It is a complicated romance of secret service and German-organized *jehad* on the Frontier. Athelstan King is pitched against the beautiful but mysterious intriguer Yasmini and undergoes great physical and mental trials in discovering the secret of the Khinjan caves. The verse headings and something of the diction

of Kipling combined with a little of Rider Haggard's *She* and the asides of Seton Merriman have gone to the making of this tale. The influence of Kipling's diction may be seen in the following

Who was he that he should suspect new outrage or guess he was about to be used in a game he did not understand? (p. 16)

The teerain goes when it goes (p. 17)

The question sounded like politeness welling from the lips of unsuspection (p. 20)

The game is the game for which *Kim* was being prepared. 'Teerain' is a variation of the Red Lama's *te rain* and the last sentence is in the style of Mahbub Ali *Hira Singh's Tale* (1918) is a war story narrating how a detachment of Sikh Light Cavalry operating in Flanders suddenly appeared at the mouth of the Khyber Pass. It is written in Kipling Indian English. *Guns of the Gods* (1921) is a story of rapid action and bewildering intrigue. As in Kipling's *Naulahka* there is an American mining engineer searching for gold near the palace of the Maharajah. There is a Rajput prince, a copy of the Maharajah of Gokarl Sitarun but more iniquitous and more cruel who poisons, tortures and stabs his opponents. Yasmini is his beautiful cousin the daughter of a Russian princess. In cleverness and intrigue as in beauty she excels the Gipsy Queen of *The Naulahka*. Another novel of Talbot Mundy *Om* is a long story somewhat complicated about the search for a long lost sister and her husband among the savage Abor tribe and a piece of the jade of Abor possessing supernatural qualities that has found its way into India. Chutter Chand's curio shop in Chandni Chowk is a variation of Mr Lurgan's shop in Simla. Though there is not much in common between *Om* and *Kim*, the presence of the holy old Lama in *Om*, who strove to tread the middle way is not a mere coincidence. Kipling's Lama is a grand figure grand in his child like simplicity and nobility, Mr Mundy's Lama is not so unsophisticated. He is mysterious

sphinx-like and silent, suggesting more an officer of the Intelligence Department than the head of a religious brotherhood. Cottswold Ommony, 'Om' of the story, and the Lama are at cross purposes. Om wants to know the whereabouts of his sister, the Lama wants to get back the jade. Disguised as a Brahmin *blat* in the play-acting company of the Lama and with his connivance, Om travels with him through the Central Provinces to Darjiling. Thence they proceed to Tilgaun, where he learns from Hannah Sanburn of the Marmaduke Mission that the mysterious *chela* of the Lama, Sinding, is in reality his sister's daughter. From Tilgaun, he accompanies Sirdar Sirohe Singh through dark ravines and gorges under the mighty Bramaputra up to the 'Temple of Stars', and reaches the home of the Lama who had parted from him at Darjiling. This journey reads like a dull rendering of a voyage in one of Sir Rider Haggard's romances. There we listen to the story of the Lama, a philosophical rigmarole, something in the vein of the mystical teaching of Madame Blavatsky inspired by mahatmas or 'masters' of the valley of Abor. The upshot of the story is that the Lama was ordained to bring up and educate Om's sister 'San-funho' and entrust Om with a mission for the East and the West.

'Ganpat', in his *Mirror of Dreams* (1928), shows himself to be a worthy *chela* of Kipling. He writes of Tibetan monks, plotters against the peace of India, Himalayan glaciers and Secret Service agents—stage properties used by Kipling in *Kim*. 'Ganpat's' crude handling of them calls up a memory of the master's craftsmanship.¹

Alice Eustace, in *A Girl from the Jungle* (1928), is also a close imitator of Kipling. Karin Braden, the motherless daughter of the chief engineer in a native state, is left to the care of Indian servants after the death of her father. She is a female edition of *Kim*. She marries a Mohammedan labourer and subsequently enters the zenana of the Rajah.

¹ *The Times Literary Supplement*, 1928

of Bezwada. She manages to escape from the zenana in nearly the same way as Kim does from the school with a wandering mendicant who accepts her as a *chela*. The resemblance does not stop here. She also carries a paper on her person like Kim as a charm. In the case of Kim it was his baptismal certificate and his father's marriage certificate, in the case of Karin it is her father's visiting card. Colonel Martyn of the Intelligence Department reminds the reader of Colonel Creighton. As the daughter of a chief engineer Karin finds herself heiress to a great fortune. With her wealth she acquires the manners of a *pukka mem sahib* and lives in European style unlike Kim who was not at all comfortable in a *sahib's* outfit. At a residency ball she comes across an Indian gentleman Dilawar Roy in whom she recognizes her Holy One but who is also E 13 of the Secret Service recalling to one's memory Hari Babu and Mahbub Ali of *Kim*. Kipling's Holy Lama is a masterpiece of characterization the Holy One of Miss Eustace is a fraud. The marriage of Karin with Dilawar though improbable has elements of romance.

34 *Foran Somers and Craig*

Some writers do not imitate Kipling closely but show traces of his influence. Captain Bedford Foran in *The Border of the Blades* (1916) a stirring tale of Frontier intrigues has given in the character of Major Maxwell, a Strickland of the army. In his familiarity with the ways of the natives he bears a close resemblance to Kipling's Strickland of the police. The House of Lallaji the beautiful dancer famous from Kandahar to the plains of India recalls the House of Suddhoo. Lallaji is moreover represented as a player in the great Game. Mr Mark Somers in pitching Pete against Ramji's mesmeric powers has also created a Strickland but without the latter's omniscience.¹

Mr A. E. R. Craig in *The Beloved Rajah* (1927) shows unmistakable traces of Kipling. The Falak Nama before

¹ *As It Happened* (1928)

its alteration is a copy of the palace in the *Naulahka* and resembles a 'rabbit wairen', the Queen Mother, who comes from the hills and swears by Indur, reminds one of the Gipsy Queen. The Rajah of Nulrawar, like the Rajah of Gokral Sitarun, is stated to have exactly three hundred wives. A phrase like the 'Disturber of Hearts' calls up to memory the Flower of Delight of *Kim* and the ladies of the most ancient profession in the world in the House of Suddhoo by Taxali Gate.

35 *Kim's cousins*

Kim, the wonderful child of Kipling's imagination, has fascinated many Anglo-Indian writers. Mr R. J. Minney's Motihari is a cousin of Kim. Like Kim he is an orphan left to fend for himself in a small village. He possesses the same curiosity, if not the same intelligence. To him also the Grand Trunk Road or the Road to Delhi on which travelled 'the strolling minstrels, the wandering entertainers and the fakirs and yogis, who led a nomadic existence' is a source of endless delight, 'the wondrous sights of Ind firing his imagination'. Like Kim he is taken care of by a white man. In the old Indian doctor to whose care Motihari is assigned, we have a suggestion of Babu Hurree Chunder Mookerjee. Of course the old doctor has little in common with the inimitable Bengali of *Kim*. But Minney is not Kipling, and the story takes a different course from this point. The difference is due not only to the difference between the individuality of the authors, but also to the different periods at which they wrote. Kipling wrote when India was exposed to the machinations of Russian spies, Minney during the hey-day of the non-operation movement.

Mr John Eyton, in Tota of *The Dancing Fakir*, in Jimmy Vaine, in Kullu and Drew Bartle, has given us a few boys who belong to the family of Kim. Like Kim, Tota is delighted with everything new that meets his eye on the Mysore road.

He was seeing new things at the rate of one in five minutes on that straight and stately road between the twisted old banyan trees. It was never empty: there were files of carts with their smug little white bullocks, and in them sat women and children. There were gold men,

of donkeys and of sheep; here and there a shaven priest clad in bright orange—a continuous procession all making for Mysore along the cool and shady road. (*The Dancing Fakir* p. 89)

In *Expectancy* Mr. John Eyton gives a study of an imaginative sensitive motherless child and records how India affects him after his unhappy days in England. East of Suez his imagination gets excited.

There began to bloom in him a quality of mind definitely new—an expectancy—a wonder—even a confidence in the unlikely. (p. 85)

As a record of the first impressions of an English child in India *Expectancy* is not surpassed even by *Kim*. In *Kullu of the Carts* Mr. John Eyton draws the portraits of two boys: one a Eurasian, the other an Indian. Drew Bartle, the brownish brother of three Eurasian girls who are ashamed of their mixed origin and especially of their brother, has a close resemblance to Kim. He has Kim's wanderlust and the desire to see new scenes; finally he runs away with Kullu of the Carts. The best scene in this book is the *serai* where Drew Bartle's attempts to show that he is a sahib are applauded as successful mimicry. His experiences in the school at Brailley meant for Sons of European gentlemen, when confronted with his less unusually coloured companions, are full of a maddening bitterness. It is not surprising that he soon leaves that stronghold of colour prejudice, the Godwin College Brailley. His friend Kullu is very intelligent and resourceful. His love for Duroo is sincere. But he is not as convincing as Jimmy Vaine or Drew Bartle. He is all

right on the carts and in the *serai*, but his rescue of Drew Bartle from Godelin College, their pursuit by the police, the way in which he steals the police elephant, their encounter with Bhagat the robber, and their adventures in the Bulbulla Fen, an impassable and dangerous tangle of rushes and quicksand, while thrilling enough, are not true to life. In *Bulbulla* one is in the realm of unreality and romance. But for Indian names in the book a great effort of imagination would be necessary to regard *Bulbulla* as a novel of India. Like Jimmy, Mr Eyton has apparently enjoyed a ride on an elephant and has wandered through the forests of India. He writes in a straightforward manner and with ease and precision.

Mr H K Gordon, in the *Shadow of Abdul*, gives a picture of the Grand Trunk Road and of Simla in 1928 and notes the changes that have come over Kipling's India during the past fifty years.¹ He finds the Grand Trunk Road,

¹ How Simla has changed since the days of Kipling and in what respects it is still the same is discussed by Mr Robert Bernays, Special Correspondent in India of the *New Chronicle* in an article which appeared in that paper. Simla, where the destinies of 320 millions of people (now 352) are 'guarded and guided', still has about it 'the atmosphere of a rather exclusive holiday resort'. He attributes it to the presence of English children, and to the novel means of transport. Even to-day to see the women shopping from the rickshaws on the Mall, and men riding to their offices, is to be transported right back to the eighteenth century 'with its sedan chairs and its statesmen on horseback'. According to Mr Bernays, Simla is unchanged in appearance. Ladies' Mile, the Jakhro Hill, and Annandale racecourse three thousand feet below, are the same. The 'scene of weekly gymkhanas where the rank and beauty of Simla play musical chairs on horseback and perform other hair-raising feats of daring' is still the same. It is still the 'whispering gallery where an indiscretion at a picnic is repeated in half the dinner parties of Simla the same night'. It is still a 'marriage market where a girl can seldom survive single more than a couple of seasons', because it is a place where 'the men are in proportion about five to one to the girls' and where 'there are limitless opportunities for romance in moonlight, picnics and long rides back from a remote tennis party with the sun setting in a red aureole behind the mountains, and the lights coming out in the pine-woods like so many Wendy cottages in Peter Pan'.

'The beautiful women that once took the evening air in their rickshaws and the gallant young men who escorted them on horseback have vanished. Their successors are playing tennis or attending bridge parties. For when

as grand as it was when *Kim* gazed with wonder at its picturesque spectacles of moving humanity but writes

the woman from Kulu no longer travelled in a bullock rath
She rattled past them in an antiquated Ford its hood draped
round with lengths of flapping cotton cloth to keep her
purdah safe (p 151)

Present day Simla life is thus described

The triviality of Simla was behind him [Hugh]—its tennis
and its picnics and its dancing its grumbling denationalized
Indians its parliament which bickers over trifles—while
the farmer struggles against ruin and disease preys upon
under nourished bodies and the money lender takes his toll
unchecked its Secretariat with all the files and pigeon holes
and desks at which men toil and know it is not they who
govern (p 148)

36 S K Ghosh

Among Indian writers of English fiction who have
been provoked into a rejoinder to Kipling's aggressive
imperialism and his belief that East and West can never
meet Mr S K Ghosh deserves mention His *Prince of
Destiny* is a plea for the meeting of East and West In
Prince Barath the book seeks to present a union of the
highest ideals of the East and West The Prince is
represented as the instrument of England's destiny in
India Mr Ghosh finds in the abandonment of the policy
of Lord Beaconsfield the main cause of the deplorable
relations of England and India In Kipling he sees a
writer who has prevented the press of England from learn-
ing the truth about India in general and Bengal in parti-
cular His references to Kipling who came out of India
like a meteor and burst upon the English horizon and

Kipling wrote bridge had not been invented and lawn tennis was barely in
its infancy

who became 'the prophet of England, aye of Europe' are not meant as compliments

“The evil would have been less”, says Mr Ghosh, “had it been confined strictly to politics. But an English writer arose, a mere youth, who wrote stories in the English papers in India heaping contempt upon the people of Bengal generally, as being the prime movers in the political agitation. The Bengali writers retaliated with fiction in another form” (p 139)

He thinks that the evil effects of Kipling's misrepresentation of India can only be averted by men like Wingate and women like Ellen

‘For if there were one more Ellen and one more Wingate, there might also be one more Barath’ (p 158)

NOVELS OF ANGLO INDIAN LIFE (1)

IN this chapter we shall survey the works of some of the modern writers of Anglo Indian life¹ The number of such writers is very large but the quality of their work is not very high In many respects they keep up the traditions of Kipling Their Anglo India is in the main, Kipling's Anglo India but treated more fully While Kipling is a chronicler of the official and social life of hill stations like Simla they take us all over India Many of them are women writers and they (Mrs Maud Diver and Mrs G H Bell for example) naturally protest against Kipling's flippant treatment of Anglo Indian women But as an unconscious tribute to the master in their descriptions of Anglo India they follow Kipling more or less closely

37 Mrs B M Croker

Mrs Croker whose literary career extends from 1892 to 1919 has written over thirty novels Most of them

Among Anglo-Indian writers of fiction of the eighties Mr Curwen occupies an honoured place He came out as editor of *The Times of India* in 1877 He proved a very successful journalist but his heart was in literature In 1886 he published in Blackwood's his tale of *Zit and Xoe* It is a story full of poetic fancies a story of Adam and Eve from a Darwinian point of view The plot of the story is developed in the luxuriant scenery of the tropics but it is not an Anglo Indian story in the sense in which we have used the word in this book *Lady Bluebeard* is

describe Anglo-Indian life, most of them have their plot partly laid in the East and partly in the West, most of them have for their theme the trials and difficulties of loving couples who are destined to be happy in the end. In *Proper Pride* (1882), *amour propre* is the real cause of the unhappiness of Sir Reginald Fairfax and Lady Fairfax. The latter is an inexperienced and spirited girl of eighteen, who easily falls into the traps laid by a half-caste, Miss Mason. *Some One Else* is a variation of *Proper Pride*. A curmudgeon uncle leaves his nephew, Miles, not only his fortune but also a wife. Both Miles and his intended bride, Haidee, dislike being forced into marriage, but they marry in the end. *Pretty Miss Neville* (1885) also deals with cousins estranged in Ireland but united in India. It is full of sensational incidents. As 'Pretty Miss Neville', the heroine leads Mulkapore a dance. Mrs. Ubes is the scapegoat of the station, as Mrs. Vane is its kindly gazette. Mrs. Roper's advice to Nora on the voyage to India is characteristic.

'But take my advice, and have nothing to say to the military, they are pleasant but poor. A Bengal or Bombay civilian, well up—if not already a member of council—is your man. And once married, you can flirt away with the redcoats as much as ever you please' (p. 128).

Diana Barrington, the heroine of the novel of the same name, is brought up in the jungles of Central India. She is a 'beautiful ruby in an old rag'. How a jungle girl behaves in a small cantonment station and a bigger town like Sindri is the theme of the novel. She marries Captain Fitzroy. They quarrel only to kiss again with tears. The real achievement of Mrs. Croker is Peggy Magee. Mrs. Croker knows Ireland and the Irish far better than the Anglo-Indians. She repeatedly makes use of the hackneyed theme of loathing turned into love—this is the suggestion in *Quicksands* (1915), which is developed in *Given in Marriage* (1916), though the latter is not an Anglo-Indian novel. In *Mr. Jervis* (1894) the inevitable marriage

is delayed because Mr Jervis who is exceedingly rich pretends to be very poor and is under the impression that a streak of madness runs in his family Mrs Croker's Indian books take the reader practically all over India they show great powers of observation and a vast range of experience She knows the small and big Anglo Indian stations well and can hit off their characteristics in a few bold strokes She has wit humour and irony She loves the jungle and the open field All her heroes are lovers of horseflesh and hunt They are not mere types but possess an individuality of their own The heroines however are all alike These novels are amusing and vivacious but suffer from monotony of treatment and themes

38 Mrs Maud Dyer

Mrs Maud Dyer occupies an honoured place among the novelists of military and Frontier life of recent times Since 1907 when she made her mark in *Captain Desmond V C* she has been steadily adding to her reputation *Captain Desmond V C* *The Great Amulet* (1909) and *Candles in the Wind* (1909) are among the earliest of her novels and constitute a sort of trilogy having a number of identical characters and the identical *milieu* Her earlier novels cloy the reader by a luxuriance of romantic flowers in the garden of her prose Like her favourite Honor Meredith later on Honor Desmond she is 'eternally interested in the manifold drama of Indian and Anglo Indian life and she has the gift of portraying this drama in charming words Most of her novels are built after the same pattern She has an intimate knowledge of the life of Englishmen in the military stations of the North West Frontier She has known the trials and temptations of the Englishmen stationed there She has felt for them and with a sympathy born of the experience of their hard life she has immortalized them in her novels All her heroes are military men, she seems to have little love for the

civilian The heroes are of the regulation type, with a family likeness—tall, stalwart men, not quite young, typically English in their surface stolidity, and having an infinite capacity for deep feeling below She looks upon them with the eyes of a woman and idealizes them, seeing beauty and heroism in their rugged and unimpressive exterior Whether it be Captain Desmond, V C, or Eldred Lenox or Sir Thomas Foisythe or the Hero of Herat, all represent men with perfect self-command and therefore destined to command others They are daring and intrepid soldiers who sum up for Mrs Diver the ideal of perfect manhood

In *The Great Amulet* she expresses with a fervour of patriotic pride the debt that England owes to such heroes

‘Even in an age given over to the marketable commodity, England can still breed men of this calibre Not perhaps in her cities but in unconsidered corners of her Empire, in the vast spaces and comparative isolation, where old-fashioned patriotism takes the place of parochial party politics . . .

‘It is to the Desmonds and Merediths of an earlier day that we are indebted for the sturdy loyalty of our Punjab and Frontier troops, for our hold upon the fighting races of the North India may have been won by the sword, but it has been held mainly by attributes of heart and spirit, by individual strength of purpose, capacity for sympathy and devotion to the interests of those we govern When we fail in these, and not till then, will power pass out of our hands’ (p 211)

Her plots are simple and have for their theme the ‘peculiar delights and dangers of marriages in India’. In *Captain Desmond, V C*, we have the portraiture of an unequally yoked pair—the tragedy of the marriage of a heroic soldier with a silly woman who does not understand him, and who is therefore sacrificed to make room for a better woman Captain Desmond and Honor Desmond are somewhat irritating because of their very perfection In *The Great Amulet* we are introduced to a more human and a less perfect pair—Miss Quita Maurice and Captain

Lenox They separate on the day of their marriage owing to a misunderstanding but the great amulet of love overcomes their pride and

they ultimately realize

ship on an equal foot This novel is much inferior to *Captain Desmond* in plot construction Theatrical coincidences thrills and hairbreadth escapes of the usual movie story type detract from its artistic value *Candles in the Wind* apart from the romantic sentiment, has the same general thesis—

the fine ideals of duty and strenuous self-devotion and loyalty developed under the stress of military service in the midst of ignorant orientals and constant danger from hostile tribesmen and disease (Baker *Guide to Best Fiction* p 144)

In this connexion may be mentioned the fourth novel of this series *Desmond's Daughter* though it appeared later (1916) Thea the daughter of Sir Theo and Honor Desmond loved by Howard loves the shy poet soldier Vincent Leigh who wins her after the usual delay and trouble which is needed to make life romantic in this lively and apparently unthinking world of British India—a world dominated by officialdom personalities and abbreviations² Vincent Leigh belongs to the usual type of Mrs Diver's military heroes only he is a little more shy a little more handsome and a little more intelligent We accompany the hero in his wanderings through the beautiful valley of Kashmir to the ancient Hindu shrine of Kedar Nath

Mrs Diver like so many Anglo Indian writers a great admirer of her

ful
by
th
many of her novels Her picture of the pilgrimage is sympathetic and Mrs Diver sees in it India's expression of her soul through an instinctive

¹ p 399

Desmond's Daughter p 49

sense of the beauty of the world ¹ Vincent Leigh is the witness of the voluntary death of a dedicated sanyasin as she flings herself down into the void in 'an ecstatic impulse of union with the Eternal Beauty of Things' ² The same note of self-devotion to the ideal of duty that rings through her first three novels characterizes this novel

'India may truly be said to rank with Italy as a woman-country, 'loved of male lands' and exercising the same irresistible magnetism, the same dominion over the hearts of men But while Italy—daughter of the passionate South—is swift in response, lavish in giving, herself a lover of lovers, India, even to her intimates, seems still a veiled mystery, aloof yet alluring, like one of her own purdah princesses Like them, also, wherever allegiance has been given, she is faithful even to death, but her demand is for hard service and a life's devotion with no sure promise of return For this cause, her appeal is irresistible to the chivalrous and the strong For this cause, she has numbered among her lovers a Lawrence and a Broadfoot, a Curzon and a Roberts, not to mention a hundred stars of lesser magnitude,—equal at least in their record of strenuous service Of these was Theo Desmond, idealist and practical soldier, and, as a lover of India, second to none Hence his pre-occupied silences and the gathering cloud on his brow' (*Desmond's Daughter*, pp 358-9)

The mettle of our hero is tested in the crucible of Frontier warfare and we have a vivid portraiture of the Samana and Tirah campaigns in Mrs Maud Diver's characteristic style *The Hero of Herat* and the *Judgement of the Sword* are not so much historical romances as books giving the 'true romance of history' ³ These two books are frontier biographies in a romantic form They are the life-story of Major Eldred Pottinger, divided into two parts 'In Herat we had the hero—youth and courage triumphant over desperate odds At Kabul we have the man—hampered, baulked, and finally traduced' ⁴ Eldred

¹ p 302

³ *Judgement of the Sword*, Author's Note

² p 313

⁴ *Ibid*

Pottinger according to Sir Henry Lawrence, helped to establish an ideal of British character Mrs Diver has re created the times and circumstances of her hero and marshalled the bare facts of his life with skill and delicacy The books are replete with word portraits of the heroes of a past generation—Stoddart Burnes, Conolly, Keane Fane Nott Cotton and Macnaghten *The Hero of Herat* is well described by *The British Weekly* as a wreath of dew laden flowers at a half forgotten shrine The description of the siege of Herat and the Kabul tragedy of 1842 is masterly The book as has been said is the product of a unusual order As an poetic description the first impression of Pottinger at Kabul the City of Orchards may be quoted

But never surely did he forget that first vision of her veiled like some purdah princess beneath a *sari* wrought in green and silver and rose with all the blossoms of all the fruit trees in the world. But beneath her silver *sari* this princess was a libertine at heart even as her women behind their latticed *boorkhas* were past mistresses in the immemorial art of intrigue and her men beneath her hospitality courage and rough good humour were unequalled in cunning cruelty and revenge (p. 4)

Mrs. Diver's next novel *Unconquered* is not a novel of India but a war novel introducing to us another of her

Like Mrs B M Croker Mrs F A Steel and Mrs Alice Perrin

forty. Since its publication she has written about fifteen books of fiction—her latest story being the *Ships of Youth* (1931). The action of the story takes place in 1928-9. She herself tells us that all Indian expressions of opinion are actual, all allusions to Soviet activities are based on fact. But the book is primarily a study of marriage in Anglo-Indian conditions. She tells us that her guiding principle in every Anglo-Indian novel that she has written has been to make even a partial presentment of its [India's] people and conditions as true in essence as imaginary pictures based on artistic selection can claim to be.

usual military heroes, Sir Mark Forsyth, who gives up home, hearth, and love 'to do his bit'. Her *Lonely Furrow* (1923) deals with the dangers of Indian marriages. Ian Challoner is separated from his wife, Edyth, not only by distance, but by soul and temperament. They are an ill-matched pair—Ian, seeking a cure for his soul-hunger and desperate loneliness in the mountains, discovers in Mrs Vanessa, a woman with an 'unmerited reputation', the ideal mate for him. However, tired of Edyth's 'chronic coquetting with her wifely duty',¹ and moved by parental affection, he insists upon her return. As might be expected, he finds no joy in her company. The only blessing that she brings with her is their little daughter, Eve. There is something very elevating in the love between father and daughter. But Edyth is tired of India and Challoner is tired of Edyth. He is attracted towards Mrs Vanessa as towards Nanga Parbat.

'Even Haramukh and Kolahoi are of the earth beside her. I have fallen a victim to many great peaks. But she, more than any of them, draws one like a magnet' (p. 431).

Mrs. Diver, anxious to preserve proprieties, does not allow Ian Challoner to marry Mrs Vanessa. To Challoner, Edyth was inalienably 'his wife', and not being a libertine these two words had almost the potency of a talisman for him.

'And there remained the disconcerting paradox that although his whole relation with Edyth had become a living lie, the Church and the Law upheld it. With Vanessa he could live true truth—purged of falsifications and suppressions yet, in the eye of the Church and the Law, they would be outside the pale. He was modern-minded enough to feel there was profanity in keeping up the convention of a union no longer sanctified by love, while yet he inherently respected the tenets of tradition and religion' (p. 434).

The help of typhoid is invoked to resolve this disconcerting tangle, and Challoner dies of it. Mrs Diver shows admirable restraint in the handling of the tragic situation,

¹ *Lonely Furrow*, p. 307

as also in delineating human emotions and passions. Her characterization is good and her descriptions of Kashmir mountain scenery are wonderful.¹

Far and still a miracle of colour it gleamed down there three miles of turquoise blue water violet in shadow flowing close under the glaciers that gave it birth (p. 185)

She is however not insensible to the consequences of the eternal strife between duty and desire which continue to disturb the peace of frail humanity and has a difficult task in reconciling a life of true truth with a life of strict adherence to social conventions and traditions

39 *John Traders* (Mrs G H Bell)²

Of writers who mark the reaction against Kipling and yet are fascinated by him Mrs G H Bell is the most important. She has so far published nine novels. In her first novel, *Sabib log* (1909) she protests against the common view of Englishmen towards Anglo-Indian women made popular by Kipling's stories and novels. She defends Anglo Indian women against the charge of idleness, flirtation, frivolity and purposelessness. She would have her rea¹

India have no time for

to Mrs Bell have to

to make both ends meet, to endure calmly the sheer fatigue of constant journeyings the heart break of constant separations the loneliness of continual changes. They

¹ See also *Lonely Furrow* p. 11 and p. 125

² Mrs Bell is the widow of Captain George Henry Bell of the 27th Panjab Regiment. Her sympathy for the wives of Indian soldiers is a

a month as pension and it was to a great extent owing to Mrs Bell's

know from bitter experience that India steals their husbands and children, their youth, strength, looks, talents, and energy, destroys their little niches in England, their friendships, their circle of acquaintances, and gives nothing save memories 'Oh luxurious East, you are an utter fraud', so writes Esmé Norman, the heroine of *Sahib-log*, after some experience of India—she who had thought India a place where men had nothing to do but draw big salaries, play polo and shoot tigers, and where women had merely to wear 'muslin frocks' and go to 'heaps of dances'

Another object that Mrs Bell has in writing this novel is to teach her sisters in India the important part they may play in creating a feeling of imperial solidarity

'A few pale faces, set on a throne beside authority, without power, yet wielding the influence of their position! A few faces exalted above the peoples! Let them hold their head high, let them prove themselves worthy "in all time of our tribulation, in all time of our wealth" for England's sake' (p 89)

She deplores the attitude of those women who limit their knowledge of India to cantonments, to 'a suspicion of prices, a small vocabulary, a list of stores and an utter ignorance of the natives' An Englishwoman, she says, in all that she may do, should keep in view how her action would affect the position of *Sahib-log* in India, she should show herself at her best in her own household, for they are 'the source through which we Englishwomen are known', and 'if we fail in our intercourse with native servants the very foundation-stone of our dealings with natives is ill-laid' She considers that 'it will be a sedative—a safety valve, a pacification' if Englishwomen cultivate the acquaintance of the wives of native officers Of course even Esmé Norman never thinks that it is possible to be friendly with the natives on terms of equality, but she recommends it because it will hold the Empire and be valued as conferring 'izzat' *Sahib-log* is written with a definite purpose But Mrs Bell, when she is not conscious of it,

curiously imitates Kipling *Safe Conduct* also is written with the object of presenting the human case for the British in India. It is however full of the tittle tattle of Simla tea tables. Audrey Fenwick, a grass widow, is drawn in the manner of Kipling's Mrs Hauksbee. She is intensely real and raises the book above the commonplace.

The Mortimers (1922) is a remarkable study of two strong personalities. Mr Mortimer as Commissioner of a Panjab division, has to deal with a village on the verge of mutiny under the influence of a Hindu emissary of political revolt Chandar Bose. Mrs Mortimer is an equally strong woman. She rejoins her husband after spending seven years as the secretary of a noted Bolshevist in Russia. She is thus in a position to contrast the cruelty of Bolshevik rule with the justice and humanity of British rule.

In *In the Long Run* she breaks new ground. The everlasting theme of sex jealousy that constitutes the *motif* of the majority of the books of fiction does not come into it at all. In this novel the breach between Gillian and her husband Sir Anthony Nugent, the recently appointed Governor of the Panjab, is due to their differences on political questions. She was a Socialist member of Parliament and Sir Anthony is an old Tory. Gillian is deeply interested in the emancipation of Indian women and plays into the hands of Indian agitators—Prem Kaur, the educated wife of Narain Singh and the clever Tota Ram, the editor of a seditious paper. She is asked to visit Khalsapur, the stronghold of the Akalis, delivers a speech which is misinterpreted and distorted in translation and gets into trouble but saves herself by jumping through a window. There is a riot in which some Akalis and an English officer are killed. She has to pass the whole night in the house of a loyal Sikh, tended by his widowed daughter in law Amrit Kaur. The rest of the novel deals with the political consequences of her escapade. She has to choose between a compulsory return to England and discarding her political views. She is wiser for her

experience and elects to be a good wife Mrs Bell understands Lady Gillian better than Sir Anthony Lady Gillian is full of life and feeling, Sir Anthony is stolid Mrs Bell's sketch of an educated Sikh lady, Prem Kaur, in this novel is a rare phenomenon in Anglo-Indian fiction Her sympathies, however, are not with her. She is introduced as a contrast to Amrit Kaur, the type of woman whom Mrs Bell understands, and whose cause she had pleaded before the Secretary of State The same environments which enable her to sympathize with Indian soldiers' wives and widows, make it difficult for her to understand political India She is more liberal than Mrs Savin in her outlook, but her political views do not add anything to the value of her story Perhaps the best parts of the book are the portrait of Sir Said Mahomed, a Panjab minister, and the description of Lady Gillian's visit to his zenana Sir Said Mahomed reminds one of Sir Fazl-i-Hussain of the Panjab

'He had the grand manner of his race and a very masculine presence He was tall, imposing, well-featured Nothing could have been less subtle, pliable or elusive than his air His speech was blunt and direct and volleyed out in a rough bass voice Gillian found herself to be socially at ease with him and interested by his conversation, which was of political matters' (p 45)

We shall not lift the purdah drawn across the 'wives' apartments' of Sir Said Mahomed, and shall leave the reader to study Chapter V of *In the Long Run* for himself But as Lady Gillian came out of the house of the 'most powerful man in the Punjab', she shrank before the 'colossus of her own ignorance that in London had passed for up-to-date information on all Indian questions' Lady Gillian, in spite of her varied experience of East and West, felt for the first time, with an intensity of pity and wonder, the 'strangeness of life and its divergence from every plan declared and every path laid down'

In *Jean, a Halo and Some Circles* (1926), Mrs Bell shows

some originality in the choice of her heroine and her vocation. The life of a military station like Quetta, as affecting the heroine has been faithfully described. There are no balls and bazaars no hunting expeditions and picnic parties. The only reference to a club occurs when a friend of Miss Jean Bell bitterly complains that being a school mistress she cannot join the club while an Indian officer of the Indian Medical Service was a member. As a heroine too Jean Bell is different from the usual type because she possesses neither much beauty nor courage nor character. She is just an ordinary girl working for her living in a military station. The most important feature of this novel is the vivid picture that it gives us of sergeants wives in India. Apart from Kipling the private soldier or the sergeant has had no chronicler. Mrs Bell is impressed by the large hearted humanity of these sergeants wives—strong mild courageous. Women in whom the tide of race ran true and deep and silent. As a representative of these strong mild courageous women Mrs Bell has created Ruth Godsave one of the few living characters of Anglo Indian fiction. We see her as the regiment is marching past

standing with one hand on her hip while her right arm moved a perambulator to and fro in order to lull to sleep the infant daughter of preoccupied Mrs Law. A man's cap was stuck without care on to the woman's dark and abundant hair. A brown woollen jacket barely met across her chest. She had a glowing skin and her lips and cheeks and eyes held firelight in them. Standing there alone she was conspicuous but she would not have been conspicuous in a crowd. She drew eyes. In the opinion of many of the marching men William Godsave's lass would have done better to have stayed near the married quarters and out of sight for since the War there had been a great reaction towards decorum among the soldiers

but with would not
the sound of
ly energy for
any public opinion (p 122)

Mrs Bell's next novel, *The Foreigner* (1928), like the *Quest and Conquest* of Mr V E Bannisdale, deals with the exploits of George Thomas. It is discussed in Chapter X. In *Hot Water*, published recently, she laughs at the Commission of Health, Hygiene, and Welfare as Kipling does at the travelling M P. Anne Knightley, the beautiful secretary to Lord Brierley, so controls the Commission that they come to be called Anne's Nannies, to the scandal of Anglo-India and to the delight of the Indian press. The most amusing scene is that in which the discomfiture of the Commission is described in a Panjab village. The novel is full of fun and humour, is free from Mrs Bell's didactic tendency or political bias, and shows her mature style at its best.

40 *Mrs Alice Perrin*

Mrs Alice Perrin, whose literary career covers about a quarter of a century, is a prolific writer of Anglo-Indian fiction. The common theme of her stories and novels is the tragedy of Anglo-Indian marriages in the *mofussil*. In *The Woman in the Bazaar* (1915) we have the tragic story of the pretty, unsophisticated daughter of a country vicar who comes to India as the wife of Captain Coventry. She almost falls a prey to the temptations to which married women are exposed in India, and the jealous nature of her husband forces her to become a woman of the bazaar. It is a pathetic tale, well managed, but borders upon the sensational. In *Separation* (1917) her theme is the same. Guy Bassett, a keen Public Works engineer (probably a tribute to her husband), devoted to his work and to India, marries a girl who detests India. He is a good husband, and for the sake of his wife accepts the post of an engineering clerk in London and agrees to live with his terrible mother-in-law. He is a good fellow and evidently Mrs Perrin's favourite, for she conveniently kills Clara Bassett to enable Guy to marry Ruth Janiver. But in spite of Mrs. Perrin, Clara is the most striking of her

characters. It is she who makes the book. She is pretty and affectionate but selfish. Without telling her husband she appeals to her mother to rescue her from India and calmly anticipates her mother's death. She loves her husband in her own tenacious selfish way, and the prospect of separation makes her genuinely miserable. She is wonderful because she is so unreasonable and selfish. Mrs. Perrin understands Claras much better than Guy Bassetts or even Mrs. Partridge. The latter is a most amazing housewife: her devotion to work and duty rises to the level of the monstrous. Mrs. Perrin's next work, *Star of India* (1919) is unequal in construction. In the first part the tragedy of the beautiful Stella Carrington—a spirited girl of seventeen, tired of her genteel village existence—wins our sympathy. Her marriage to the elderly Colonel Crayfield evokes horror. Her love for the new Assistant Commissioner is the natural outcome of her situation. But the rest of the book, after the discovery of their love by the infuriated Colonel, is flat. The visit of the radical interfering young woman bent on political reform is a time-worn feature of Anglo-Indian fiction, but is ill-harmonized with the main story. The best achievement of the book is Stella Carrington. The unhappiness of ill-assorted marriages, behind a lightly touched Indian background, forms the subject of her next novel, *Government House* (1925). Sir Temple Rochford, the Lieutenant Governor of the Central Provinces, who behaves more like a romantic hero than a highly placed official, and Mr. Cardale, Magistrate of Bijapur, both fall in love with Miss Annable Heath, who goes out to India—the best place in the world for young people and poor people—as a governess with Mrs. Cardale, a sickly superstitious and silly woman. Her marriage is a failure, and she is conveniently removed by death. Mr. Cardale declares his love for Miss Heath, but she prefers to go over to Government House as governess to Lady Rochford's children. There she wins the confidence of Lady Roch-

ford and the love of Sir Temple. She is told by Lady Rochford that she was a bigamist and that her first husband was still living. Miss Heath decides to leave for England. Sir Temple Rochford suddenly dies of cholera, leaving the coast clear for Mr Cardale to win Annabel Heath.

Mrs Perrin writes with simplicity and sincerity, but the story is not quite convincing. The theme is commonplace and there is not much of description or characterization. With the exception of Lady Rochford no character, not even the amiable governess, has anything striking. The story leaves the impression that in India a pretty English girl with a little common sense has every chance of a profitable marriage, if not to a Lieutenant-Governor, at least to a district magistrate.

41 *Mrs E W Savl.*

Mrs E W Savl is a prolific writer of fiction, mainly Anglo-Indian. For the last twenty years she has been writing novels at the rate of about two a year.¹ Many

¹ The following account of Mrs E W Savl is summarized from an interview that she recently gave to a correspondent of the *Book-Finder*.

Mrs Savl is the sixth child of her parents. Her father was 'too much of an idealist and scholar, with something of the artist thrown in'. Her mother was 'very young, very pretty and amazingly innocent when she married'. Mrs Savl tells us how she gained her 'insight into native character and customs'. For years, at an age 'when girls expect a good time socially and are surfeited with dances and entertainments', she lived on the banks of the Ganges, with her husband and small family, 'surrounded by Indian villages and no white neighbour within reach for a great many miles, with bad roads and no motor cars then in existence'. Incidentally she grew familiar with native life in her visits to the villages and 'was often called upon to prescribe for sick babies and treat even serious illnesses in an emergency'. She naturally inspired a 'touching gratitude and faith in the simple folk'. She thinks with sadness that all this feeling for the Sahibs 'should have been allowed to disappear (or is disappearing) through wicked and lying propaganda, which is not countered, but left to spread like a festering sore'.

Her first novel was published in 1910, when she retired to London and 'possibly', she says, 'my fiftieth book is being advertised'. She never 'planned out' her stories but keeps 'the theme somewhere in mind while taking a free hand in the development of it'. And she writes direct on the typing machine.

of her books have gone through several editions, from which it may be inferred that she enjoys great popularity. But popular fiction is seldom high class fiction. Mrs. Savitri is interesting enough and she knows what her public wants. Her books are full of thrills, complications, dramatic coincidences and melodramatic situations. She has created vampires, self-denying beautiful maidens, heroic men and advocates of free unions who hate the convention of orthodox marriage. She takes her readers into the world of artists, to beauty marts, romantic sea-side mansions with a suspicious reputation, the clubs of Calcutta, plantations and estates. She describes Indian bazaars and the heat, the rains and the floods of Bengal very vividly. Her Indians are either villains or licentious nawabs. On the problem of mixed marriages and questions of a political nature arising out of the relation of the Government to the people, she has expressed typically Anglo Indian views. She knows the Eurasian underworld and paints it realistically. Madness, criminality, besottedness, murder, mystery and romance all have a place in her novels. She writes clearly and works up her situations carefully. This is all to her credit. Yet she does not rise above the level of triviality characteristic of Anglo Indian fiction. Her themes are generally concerned with love complexities either before or after marriage. The unhappiness of married life that we may find in some of her novels has nothing peculiarly Indian about it. Had the scenes been laid in England, the plot would have remained the same. In her novels it is not so much environment as character that explains the comedies and tragedies of Anglo Indian married life. One feels that the same characters, transplanted to Africa or China, would behave precisely in the same manner. Her characters are fixed and only adapted to the plots. An examination of her plots shows the sameness of her situations, construction and development.

In *A Blind Alley*, a wife separated at the church door

from her husband, after a life of varied flirtations and a serious indiscretion, comes out incognita to India, woos him and wins his love, but is disappointed by fate on the eve of her honeymoon. In *A Prince of Lovers* Tony Newbold, 'a victim of his own extraordinarily handsome and charming personality', married to an insane wife, leads a life of freedom in India, seduces the wife of an officer in the Indian Medical Service, makes furious love to Mrs Nancy Maynard, succeeds in tempting her to commit an act of social and moral suicide, carries on with chorus girls and French shop-assistants, and is still fortunate enough to regain Nancy. In *The Tree of Knowledge*, the beautiful Mrs Crystal Conway of Kalikotha is seduced from the path of duty by a vamp, runs away to her lover and eats of the Tree of Knowledge. The husband and the erring wife are ultimately reconciled. In *The Unattainable* Captain Dysart marries a married woman, tries to seduce another man's wife, and is regenerated through his love for Edwina Hope. In *A Fool's Game*, Moya, unhappily married to Cyril Munro, loves and is loved by her rich cousin, Roy Baines—Mrs Savi's ideal hero. Munro makes love to Psyche, but Roy marries her for Moya's sake. In the end both Cyril Munro and Psyche are removed from the path of the lovers and Roy makes Moya happy. In *Baba and the Black Sheep* Max Harding, an ex-convict, leading the retired life of a hermit at Rajnala, loves Jean Farley, the Missy Baba. Jean's step-mother proves to be the wife of Harding and the black sheep of the story. In *Satan Finds* Mrs Savi paints the unscrupulous career in England and India, of a fascinating but thoroughly immoral grass-widow who does her utmost to make the innocent Mousie unhappy. *Our Trespasses*, similarly, is the record, full of crude entanglements, of a wicked, Byronic knight, Sir Philip Ransome. *Acid Test* is another story of misunderstandings between a husband and wife. The main theme is trite, but as a picture of the trials and temptations to which an English

youth is likely to be subjected in India the grave of faithful lovers it is not without interest.

Mrs Savi regards marriage as a 'gamble, a great gamble and a risky undertaking. A study of her novels, however shows that the risk is not very serious after all. In *Vagrant Love* Philippa Ford the beautiful eighteen year-old daughter of a poor planter at Begumbasti marries Marmaduke Maitland for his money but comes to love him in the end. In *Mistress of Herself* Maxim Adair sacrifices herself out of pity for Bertie a blind war hero and an erstwhile lover of Maxim's sister Patricia. But Bertie on regaining the use of his eyes finds he really loves Maxim and not her sister. Similarly in *Daggers Drawn* Joyce finds her future lover and husband purely by chance in her eccentric employer. In *On Trust* Hilary Sinclair goes out to India to marry Owen Childs but marries Julian Orme platonically. But her gratitude for Orme's kindness develops into passionate love. Their happiness however is temporarily disturbed by the unexpected appearance of Orme's wife who had been reported to be dead. In *The Great Gamble* Lorna Brett gambles with fate in marrying Tony Carslake but wins. *On Trust* records the view of Mrs Savi about Anglo Indian marriages which people may not credit but which she relates as a fact.

People may not credit the fact but the best wives I have come across in the ten years I have been in the country have been born and reared in India. Something to do with the psychology of the East possibly. Girls grow up and regard the marriage tie with respect and a husband as a solemn charge very much as mothers regard their children so that their duty to the home is an outstanding feature of their domestic life (p. 110)

Banked Fires (1919) illustrates Mrs Savi's fondness for complex plots. It is so complex as to be somewhat perplexing. The scene of the story is a small Bengal station. Mrs Savi describes the monsoon of Bengal, the

life of rural India and the bazaar at Sonasal with her usual picturesqueness. There is a little digression on the educative value of the cinema in a rural town.

Mrs. Savl has no use for Indian characters in her novels except in the background. She introduces a few ayahs, is interested in the marriage of the Hindu Sunia to her Mohammedan lover, and knows a few dusky beauties in the back portion of the compounds of some English bungalows. She knows a few nawabs also, the Majids or Russul-Ismet-Khans, the rich, cultured Indians of to-day, who are more interested in field sports than self-government. Though Mrs. Savl loves them, she is much too conscious of their oriental sensuality. The only Mohammedan lady of importance in her novels is Jasmina, but she is not quite faithful to her Nawab, and encourages an English lover. The mother of Babu Hari Mohan in *A Daughter-in-Law* is the only Hindu who is not quite a caricature. But she is a little too simple and too good. Mrs. Savl does not feel quite comfortable in the Indian world, and avoids it as far as she can. She seems to introduce Indian characters because she writes romances whose scenes are laid in India. In *A Forlorn Hope*, she can admire the Maharaja's mother because of her jewels. She has no sympathy for Ram Latayal who loses his faith in Englishwomen and English civilization because Molly, an English flirt, proves false to him. Mrs. Savl condemns the conduct of Molly because 'she had for ever lowered the Indian's estimate of her countrywomen'.

Out of the large number of other Anglo-Indian writers who are distinguished neither by the quality nor the quantity of their work, a few may be noticed here. O. Douglas gives us an amusing and readable book in *Olivia in India* (1913) or the adventures of a Chota Miss Sahib written in the form of letters. *Just Because* (1915) by Miss Peterson is a tale of misunderstanding between a husband and wife who, while loving each other, fail to pull together. Miss Mary Julian in *Where Jasmines Bloom* (1917) attributes the

unhappiness of married life to environment Henry Oakes married to Daisy, is loved by Mrs James Mrs James has no power over him in the plains but beside the haunted lake in Kashmir they live in a world of their own Mrs Victor Rickard's novel *The Frantic Boast* (1917) is a poor imitation of Galsworthy's *The Man of Property* Judith married to a devoted husband leaves him for a popular London journalist In the end, however they are reunited It may be that Coleston like the heroes of the woman novelist is a much better man than Soames He does not look upon his wife as his property and is genuinely heroic and selfless It may be because Mrs Rickard unlike Galsworthy, does not regard the institution of marriage as iniquitous and desires to suggest that a husband can always win back his wife only if he be a Coleston She however does not tell us how Judith feels afterwards Did Judith come to love Coleston? It is doubtful

The Leopard's Leap (1919) by Boxwallah' is a crude book having for its plot the seduction of a married woman by an Indian Army officer who is already married and is a murderer to boot

Mrs Barbara Wingfield Stratford writes with sincerity though she shows very little skill in handling her plot *Beryl in India* (1920) is an honest story of married life in India Beryl struggles against temptation but gives herself to another man and then begins to waver between her husband and her lover in a manner which should interest psychologists When her shrewd Pathan servant Ismail Khan shoots her husband dead she discovers that she does not want the other man Though the theme has been developed inartistically Mrs Wingfield Stratford's Beryl is an intelligent woman who knows her country woman in India and also the natives of the country Beryl understands and appreciates India as few mem sahibs do The peculiar charm of the book does not lie in the story itself but in Mrs Wingfield Stratford's candid views about the English in India, and of the India that they rule *The*

Red Flame (1920) by Lady Miles is a fascinating study of a fascinating flirt with red hair, a study of a woman, who, whether as maiden or as wife, is not troubled by any moral scruples and thoroughly enjoys herself in every way

‘Her [Vi’s or Mrs Riddell’s] nature was totally unmoral. She was one of those things that civilization cannot chain or subdue to any law or order. Her law was the law of the child—her hands went out for meats with just that primitive daring’ (p 260)

The scene of *The Jungle Girl* (1921) by Mr Gordon Casserly is laid in Rajputana. The book begins with the usual story of domestic infelicity: the beautiful married woman, her dull, hard-working, oldish husband who does not understand her and neglects her, and the dashing young subaltern. The hero, Frank Wargrave, escapes the wiles of Mrs Norman and finds his true love in Miss Benson, the Jungle Girl of Ranga Duar who had shot six tigers.

Owen, the heroine of *The Release* (1921) married to an elderly Indian civil servant, cares more for a Malabar squirrel than her husband. Mrs H. Vaughan-Sawyer’s book, *Sport of Gods*, is remarkable for the portrait of an Indian havildar and Waziri politics. Captain James Brown, the hero, wins the love of his Sikh soldiers by his genuine appreciation of their character. Among his most devoted admirers is Havildar Hukam Singh, a tall, thin, straight man to whom Captain Brown’s wishes are law.

‘Like many of his kind he was naturally brave and, having no imagination, he was literally without the sense of fear [He had proved his courage several times and won the Order of Merit, the Indian V C]

‘In fact he was the personification of the best type of Indian soldier whose interests are to serve, who desires no individuality of his own, but simply places his existence at the disposal of his officer’ (pp 140-1)

Its plot hinges round the love of Captain Brown for May Norman. But it does not develop naturally and halts towards the end.

42 *Shelland Bradley*

Mr Shelland Bradley deserves separate notice on account of the brilliance of his style, his gift of humour power of character drawing and variety of his themes His first book, *An American Girl in India* (1907), illustrates all his qualities to great advantage It is a vivid description of a journey to and adventures in India of Nicol Fairfax, the American Girl at the time of the great Delhi Durbar of Lord Curzon Her record of experiences on board S S *Arethusa* is full of quaint observations on men and things and gives evidence of a fine sense of humour without which the book would have been no better than an eccentric guide book Mr Bradley's humour often conceals much wisdom

Now civilian number four was a man but he wasn't a gentleman It was a pity because I've a great weakness for the latter and so I guess has India No part of the British Dominions needs gentlemen to rule it so much as India (p 75)

When the American Girl landed at Bombay she was startled by the sight of a man wearing his shirt outside On learning that it was a common custom in the country she observes

It's just typical of what Western civilization has done so far for India Like new cloth on an old garment it has just patched itself on in an obvious startling ugly patch absolutely ruining the charm of things Eastern and picturesque (p 91)

Accustomed as she was to the comforts of European hotels she is not pleased with her hotel at Bombay But she has a good word to say about the custom of a separate bathroom She laughs at grown up man servants being called 'boys' From the Malabar Hill she has a vision of her first glorious Indian sunset with its myriad dancing lights reflected in the clear blue mirror of the sea Then follows a description of an amazing marriage—really amazing because the poor clergyman at St Jude's

¹ Boy is not the English word but an Indian word See Hobson Jobson

'married the eleven o'clock bride to the ten o'clock bridegroom'. "But no one could say it was my fault" he said pathetically, "You see, her name is in both the licenses".¹ In the train she comes across three old maids who had brought six casks of water and a large supply of tinned food all the way from England for use in India as they were determined not to touch Indian water or food or fruit for fear of infection. The book introduces the readers to the famous Berengaria of Slumpanugger and gives a full account of the Delhi Durbar. Mr Bradley's description of the great Durbar is a fine piece of writing. The whole Durbar seems to pass before our eyes as something belonging not to the past, but the present.

The Adventures of an A.D.C., *The Doings of Berengaria*, and *More Adventures of an A.D.C.* have no pretence even to that little plot which *An American Girl in India* possesses. But they have been composed in the same light style as *An American Girl* and show the same power of observation. *The Doings of Berengaria* is a series of slight sketches of life in a station in British India. The leading figure in the story is Berengaria, the pretty and vivacious wife of the Commissioner of Slumpanugger—a favourable representative of the smart set in India, exploited by Kipling and Mrs. Steel.²

'I believe', says she, 'John would have jogged along quite contentedly in the dreadful little station I found him in when I married him, if I had not gone and stirred things up' (*An American Girl*, p. 207)

The following extract discloses the secret of her power

'An ounce of tact and a well placed smile are all the weapons you want. If you have a pair of fine eyes you can use them too, but they are not essential. The tact and the smile will carry you through' (p. 207)

In *The Adventures of an A.D.C.* (1910) we come across Berengaria at Monaling, the summer head-quarters of

¹ p. 114

² *Scotsman*

the Lieutenant Governor of the North West Provinces Berengaria takes possession of the young A D C and imparts to him much useful information about the ladies at Monalng for example that Mrs Fox married Mr Hartman five days after the death of Mr Fox that Mrs Binsley had run away twice that The Vampire had buried three husbands and was looking for a fourth, *etc etc* Berengaria's power and tact and the judicious use of her smile are never seen to produce greater effect than when she gets all the five Misses Powell elected to the club at Monalng Apart from the inimitable character sketch of Berengaria *The Adventures of an A D C* gives a vivid account of life at a Government House and of the varied duties of an A D C In one of the chapters entitled 'The Post Bag at Government House' the author gives some specimens of curious letters An extract is given from one of them

By the grace of God your Lordship, I have seven children all babes and sucklings

Besides this abominable litter I have many relations

As your Lordship is my Father and my Mother I would require that you take this worm and wife and suckles and relations both male and female and provide for us from your bounty at a remuneration of rupees twenty per month (p 147)

In his Prefatory Note the author vouches for the authenticity of such letters But it is possible that a few necessary emendations have contributed to produce this work of art

In another chapter, Mr Bradley feelingly describes the retirement of a Lieutenant Governor, which in his words 'does not merely imply a descent in pay but also a descent in social position India may be a land of regrets to some but it is also a land where many Englishmen and Englishwomen have enjoyed the intoxication of power and felt the might and majesty of the British Empire in their own persons For them it is no easy task to come down suddenly from their empyrean heights to the commonplace life of a commonplace Englishman After

having had their own special train, to be jostled and hustled is a new experience for Sir Humphrey and Lady Sturt, and we are not surprised to learn that Sir Humphrey seemed to have aged ten years

This theme is developed into a full novel by Mrs. Perrin in *The Anglo-Indians* (1912). She contrasts the comfortable, free, luxurious life of a Commissioner in India with his quiet, narrow existence in England. It is a pathetic but gloomy picture that Mrs. Perrin presents in this novel. One hopes that it is not true as a rule. The returned Anglo-Indian may be 'an unwilling Cincinnatus'—to use a phrase of Sir G. O. Trevelyan—but it is to be hoped that with his experience, wisdom and social connexions, he does often play an important part in the political and social life of his own country. Allowing for a little exaggeration in the pictures of Mr. Bradley and Mrs. Perrin, it is true, however, that, like Mrs. Fleetwood, Anglo-Indians when they retire feel that 'life in India was not so much to be despised' ¹

In this connexion, we may notice another book, *The Master of the House* (1923), by Mr. 'Darley Dale'. It paints the disillusionment of an autocratic Indian judge who returns to England anticipating the delights of family life. His disillusionment is as complete as that of Colonel Newcome. But while the good Colonel resigns himself to the inevitable, the old Indian judge struggles in vain against it and amuses the readers like the nabobs of eighteenth-century comedies.

More Adventures of an A.D.C. (1915) is inferior to the *Adventures* on the whole, though it shows the same sense of humour and subtle irony. Mr. Bradley's latest book, *Fifty*, was published in 1927. It is not merely a series of sketches like his other books. It has a definite plot. But it also is not altogether free from Mr. Bradley's tendency to discursiveness. Cynthia, the brilliant cousin of Sir John Devenham, is a post-War edition of the American Girl and

¹ *The Anglo-Indians*, p. 138

Berengaria. But she has little to do with the main story. Mr Bradley's description of the harbour of Bombay, one of the most beautiful approaches by sea in the world, of the Towers of Silence, a strange garden, of the Yacht Club facing the harbour and commanding a glorious view of the sea, and of Malabar Hill where the hero is a witness of, and an unwilling participator in, the famous tragedy known as the Bawala Murder, are vivid but not quite relevant. Sir John Devenham's object in coming out to India was to save his cousin Dick from marrying a beautiful Eurasian and the future generations of Devenham from being black. His task is easy for Dick himself gives up his engagement with Lætitia Saunders. But love suddenly comes to him at fifty and he wins what Dick had so callously rejected. This is the central plot. All the rest, his stay with Sir James Carstin, the Governor of the Northern Province, the criticism of the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms, the life at Government House, Sir John's tour of India with Clement, Clement's lack of character, his illness and death and the startling discovery that Clement was heir to an ancient English peerage merely serve to fill the book. It is however very interesting as a study of Eurasian character and Eurasian life by an Englishman.

CHAPTER VI

NOVELS OF ANGLO-INDIAN LIFE (2)

43 *Frontier novels*

A SMALL group of novels, more interesting than those dealing with the tittle-tattle of clubs or the ironies of Anglo-Indian married life, consists of romances of Frontier life. The life on the North-West Frontier of India is full of danger, excitement, and adventure. Very often on the Frontier Englishmen have to live alone or with a small detachment of English soldiers. Female society is rare. The men there have no time for love-making or gossip. The people with whom they have to deal are hardy mountaineers who are afraid neither of killing nor of being killed, and who think that

‘the more trouble we give these cursed Feringhees now, the more liberal will be our rewards and allowances afterwards’ (*Transgression*, p. 316)

Story-writers have more respect for Afghans and tribesmen, notwithstanding their primitive savagery and blood-thirstiness, than for the Indians of the plains. They regard the Frontier man as a friend in peace and a brave enemy in war. As a result of this sympathy and respect for Afghan character, the Frontier novels are free from that tone of racial arrogance which mars the enjoyment of so many Anglo-Indian novels whose scenes are laid in the plains or hill stations of India. An ordinary Anglo-Indian novel is either a record of trivial club-gossip, scandal, and seductions, or a glorification of English character and European civilization. A Frontier novel of Anglo-Indian life (when it is not a copy of the ordinary Anglo-Indian novel) is a record of human valour and courage, both Eastern and Western.

Mr S. S. Thorburn has written two novels of Frontier life, *David Leslie* (1879) and *Transgression* (1899). The

first is an ill constructed story describing the administration and life of a Frontier district Pottsabad David Leslie loves a Pathan girl Aimana a mere child of nature He finds that she is absolutely devoid of moral principles and ends by marrying an insipid English Missy Sarfraz Khan is overdrawn He staggers Leslie by calmly saying

Sahib I see you know me I was half a Christian when Honeyman Sahib promised to get me an Assistant Commissionership but as I am still only a Tahsildar I am still a good Mohammedan I cannot afford to be otherwise in my present position (Vol 1 p 137)

Whatever one may think of Sarfraz Khan's principles his English in this passage is unexceptionable But Mr Thorburn forgets this speech and to supply a comic relief to his dull tale he makes Sarfraz say later

You told me a wise man has said that the good poleetical in border side is the honest man who speaks lies for the benefit of Government so Mr Leslie is no good because he always speaks true But I am a good man of first class because I know to speak the lies for the Surkar's sake and my own too In truth the lying is congenital to my nature therefore I am one born poleetical (Vol 1 p 128)

Here is another interesting specimen of quaint English

O Lordly Highness! We the nobles chiefs and the populations of this district greet thee with the sulphurus fire and the jolly *nautch* But you ask who pays the piper? and we proudly reply All right! Oh hang the expenses! (Vol 1 p 240)

Transgression is a sensational novel with a crude love story Colonel Fitzhugh the Deputy Commissioner and Resident of Pechistan is torn between his duty towards his wife and his love for Dolly Mrs Fitzhugh is one of those delicately nurtured ladies whom fate dooms to residence in India while nature intended them never to venture East of Suez Her spiritual love forces Colonel Fitzhugh into the arms of Miss Dolly Carew, but he

realizes his transgression before it is too late. The novel has no remarkable characters unless it be Fazl Ali, the wily *munsifi* of the spendthrift Resident who manipulates the accounts of his master and rules him. The value of *David Leslie* and *Transgression*, apart from their artistic qualities, consists in the glimpse they afford into the policy of Frontier administration in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The author tells us in *David Leslie* that 'a big row', as military men tersely call a hill expedition on a large scale, can only be undertaken if the Pathans are guilty of an outrage more audacious than mere 'cattle-lifting or the kidnapping of money-loving Hindus'. The 'obscure border murder' of an uncommonly foolish clergyman like Mr. Sheppard is also enough excuse for a Frontier war. In *Transgression* Mr. Thorburn refers to a contentious question of military policy in the following words:

'Every attempt to increase the Indian army is jealously watched and condemned by those representatives of public opinion who are at the time in opposition to the Government of the day, but if the new battalions are dubbed police, no critic objects, no critic notices even that by that trick the prescribed proportion between the white and brown constituents of the forces of the crown in India is upset' (p. 4)

A study of a few novels like *The Border of Blades* (1916) by Captain Bedford Folan, *The White Horseman* by Coralie Stanton and Heath Hosken (1924), and *A Frontier Romance* (1926) by W. G. Curtis Morgan, shows that some Frontier expeditions have been undertaken to rescue young Englishwomen who rode off alone or with their foolish gallants into forbidden tribal territory, notwithstanding the express orders of the Government against such excursions. Miss Midge is one of such girls and is rescued by the White Horseman. In *A Frontier Romance* Rhona Ware, the beautiful daughter of an American millionaire, possessing 'an incurably romantic spirit of adventure' and an insatiable desire for novelty, dares her lover, Humphrey Winter of the Frontier Police, to take her into the forbidden Pathan

country. She is carried off by the Waziris to Moosa Razak the Malik of the Abdullai Khel a dynamic personality and a magnificent animal who combined in his person craftiness, cruelty courage treachery avarice and insolence. In his sky coloured turban with flowing tail a loose shirt Mohammedan trousers and Peshawari shoes this blue eyed Afridi cut a handsome figure. Miss Ware's beauty attracts the fine barbarian who offers to make her the queen of the Abdullai Khel clan of a thousand clans tribe of a thousand tribes the fairest and the bravest on this vast Frontier. The Malik protects her against his sharp featured blue eyed olive skinned and graceful Pathan wife who is made to give to Rhona Ware 'her best sari'. Mr Morgan evidently does not know that Pathan women do not wear saris. While the abduction of native women is looked upon as a normal feature of border life the abduction of this romantic American is considered damaging to our local prestige to our prestige in India to our prestige in the whole world. Before a British punitive expedition is sent Winter manages to rescue Rhona Ware. They take shelter in a cave where they are surrounded by Pathans determined to starve them into surrender. After much bloodshed they are rescued. Miss Rhona Ware regrets her escapade and having been the means like a Frontier Helen of the death of many brave soldiers.

Mr Morgan possesses the gift of vivid characterization. Besides Bunniah Ram (an impossible name) a bloated and greasy looking person who was the wealthiest, the most powerful of a large ring of contractors who fattened on frontier strife the sketch of Miss Rhona Ware whom men at Mussorie had dubbed the film fairy, is interesting.

The grace with which she moved made one think of some sleek well groomed racehorse. Fair and pink she reminded one of the snows of the northern wastes of the ice covered mountains. The warmth of her dark brown eyes was reminiscent of the huertas of Spain of the vineyards of Italy. True

American, in her coalesced the most beautiful traits of her ancestors from the North and South of Europe. In a word, physically Rhona was not the perfect woman—there being no such being—but certainly she came very near to one's conception of a perfect woman' (p. 34)

Mr Morgan's description of Tank on the North-West Frontier shows power. He justifies the 'melodramatic elements' of the story by referring to the background which, he tells us in his prefatory note, is 'to this day replete with thrilling and sensational incidents'. The following pen-sketch of this thrilling background may be taken as a specimen of Mr Morgan's descriptive powers.

'Ten miles away were the foot-hills of Waziristan. The intervening country was undulating, sometimes flat, stony, broken and barren. The rocky hills shot up into countless spurs and jagged peaks. Ridges, crevices, ravines, gorges, nullahs existed in profuse abundance. Neither grass nor water could be seen. The rocks and stones seemed scorched and shrivelled up. The scene was one of indescribable desolation, relieved here and there by a stunted palm tree and a cluster of prickly-pear bushes' (p. 14)

Eyre Lloyd, in *Lieut. Beatrice Raymond, V.C.* (1920), relates the story of a girl who, masquerading as a soldier on the Indian Frontier, distinguishes herself in an attack by tribesmen on a Frontier post and wins the Victoria Cross. The book bears testimony to the author's remarkable knowledge of the conditions of life in the outposts of the Indian Empire in the manner of Maurice Dekobra's *The Sphinx has Spoken*. Mr Henry Milner Rideout, in *Man Eater* (1927), gives an account of 'the real and troublesome thing called the Border'

'Crags and jags, ravines, hiding-holes, good cliffs for snipers, a puzzle of black mountains. A slag heap and a dust bin, full of Waziris who don't give a dump for your imaginary line, a king-Emperor down south, or an Amir up north fighting each other and every body else. Robbery, riot, and murder before breakfast' (p. 119)

44 *Sir Francis Younghusband*

Sir Francis Younghusband the great soldier and explorer has a deeply religious and mystical soul. All the books he has written are artistic attempts to interpret Nature and his varied experiences in a spiritual sense. His *Wonders of The Himalayas*, though not a novel possesses the interest of a book of fiction. It illustrates Sir Francis's two main characteristics his love of nature and his sane religious idealism. He knows the country and its people and he writes appreciatively of both. *The Gleam* is not a story book either but a book of subtly esoteric character steeped in the mysticism of the East yet full of precept and example for Western civilization.¹ It is a serious book and records the spiritual struggle of those who are unable to accept at second hand the religion of their birth, and who therefore seek to re make their own faith. The book is likely to make a greater appeal to students of comparative religion than readers of light literature. It is more serious than *The Path* of Mr Edmund White but belongs to the same type of literature. Mr White describes the struggles of a Mohammedan and his attempts to reform his religion. Sir Francis Younghusband deals with the aspiration of Hindus, Mohammedans, Christians and others (of humanity in short) to chalk out a programme of spiritual salvation for themselves. Sir Francis's third book *But in Our Lives* is called by the author a Romance of the Indian Frontier. The main interest of the book however does not lie in the story but in its ideal of a deeply religious soldier, typical of the author himself.

This ideal of service holiness and righteousness is illustrated in the life of Evan Lee who joins an English regiment in India. If Evan Lee is Sir Francis's ideal man, Lady Meara is his ideal woman—not a drawing room orchid or a hot house plant or a manly woman who absorbed in hunting shooting tennis golf and games

¹ *Daily Telegraph*

loses all womanly grace and becomes a bad copy of man; but a woman 'brought up in rain and sunshine'. In spite of the author's partiality for her, it is doubtful whether all the readers of Sir Francis's book will stand her long. She bores, with all her talk about God, 'highest heights', 'sacred moments', and 'divine love'.

Mr. Percy King's romance of the Frontier, *Forasmuch*, offers a marked contrast to Sir Francis Younghusband's story. The scenes of light-hearted gaiety at the club are vividly painted. Mr. Percy King's soldiers, who behave like schoolboys, do so with the knowledge of the dangers that await them.

45 'Afghan', Michael John, John Delbridge, and Mrs T Pennell.

'Afghan' in his three novels *Exploits of Asaf Khan*, *The Wanderings of Asaf Khan* and *Bahadur Khan the Warrior* (1928), Michael John in *The Heir of the Malik* (1923), John Delbridge in *Sons of Tumult*, and Mrs. Theodore Pennell in *Children of the Border* (1926), take us into the land of the Pathans and give a true delineation of Pathan character. The *Exploits of Asaf Khan* by 'Afghan', according to the publishers of the book, was something of a discovery. It is described by Sir Francis Younghusband, who has contributed a short introduction to the *Exploits*, as a book that 'will be absolutely new to 99 out of 100'. Asaf Khan is a twentieth-century Oriental Highlander of the Rob Roy type. Like all Afridis he is a man of splendid physique, phenomenal courage, and extraordinary powers of endurance. He is simple, superstitious, full of guile, and a deadly marksman who, however, prefers the knife to the rifle. He is capable of gallant, even noble deeds, but perpetrates the most appallingly treacherous and bloodthirsty crimes. In loyalty and devotion he is like a dog, he does not scruple to employ the foulest means to make his master or mistress happy. We are introduced to many such men as orderlies, or bearers in Anglo-Indian novels. One is Ismail Khan,

in *Beryl in India* who kills his mistress's husband because he thinks Beryl would be really happy with her lover. In one of Mrs. Savitri's stories *The Orderly* Himmat Khan the orderly who is accused of being untrue to his salt retrieves his honour (as he thinks) by killing the dipsomaniac Mrs. Lane so that his mistress may be able to marry her lover. The strange combination of deep loyalty with blood-thirstiness is one of the outstanding characteristics of Asaf Khan. His exploits though they may appear abnormal to Europeans are not extraordinary. Most of the Afridis are potential Asaf Khans. In the *Exploits* we see Asaf Khan as a young warrior and lover. In the *Wanderings* he appears in the guise of a robber chief *cum* hadji. The Asaf Khan of the *Exploits* is an individual but the Asaf Khan of the *Wanderings* has lost his individuality. It is Rahim Khan the boy who is cleverer than Asaf Khan in whom the reader finds his hero. Afghan's third book *Bahadur Khan the Warrior* is of another type. In this book a brave Pathan finds himself in love with an equally high spirited English girl Frances Braid who is sent over the border by an unscrupulous uncle. Her adventures make the best part of the book. The end is unsatisfactory and an anti climax. Afghan like most Anglo Indians is unable to see an English girl married to a Pathan. Frances loves the brave border warrior in spite of his barbarous traits and he simply worships her. But Afghan sends her back to the slums of England treasuring the memory of Bahadur Khan whom she will not meet even in death, for he is of another creed.

The book gives the reader a glimpse of the strange land known as the border

a lawless country where violence and sudden death were ordinary occurrences where a man in his vigour in the morning might be a bloody corpse by evening or a smiling village be converted into a blazing ruin in the space of a single night (p. 238)

Bahadur Khan the warrior is a curious mixture of courage

and superstition, gallantry and barbarism—a typical son of the border, both in his virtues and vices, somewhat of an Alan Breck of the Highlands of Hindustan Timur is a shrewd border boy, and his devoted brotherly attachment to Frances is very touching. He speaks the sort of English spoken by the 'danda wallas', though a little more refined. His shrewdness and his English may be judged from the following quotation. He tells Frances how he came to know that she was English

"'Yus, y'ave," grinned Timur "Arter y'd done larfin', yer pulls aut a bit er rag an' wipes yer eyes. Ullo! thinks I, wot's comin' off naow? An' then yer blows yer snitch, an' thinks I, this ain't no bloomin' Paythan this ain't, 'e's English, an' a toff, too. 'E don't blow 'is snitch wit 'is 'and syne as we do, 'e blows it wiv 'is 'ankercher syne as the toffs do'" (pp. 139-40)

The following is a piece of prose descriptive of highland scenery and that wonder of North-West India, the oleander in its natural home

'Afar, the mountains towered in majestic grandeur, their pale summits kissing the blue sky. Dense forests of pine, of larch, of giant oaks and stately planes clothed their heights, their sides, rich with fruit trees, almond, walnut, apricot and peach, with vines on the more sunny slopes descending in graceful sweeps and picturesque terraces into the valley below, where fields of golden corn nodded and rustled in the gentle breeze. Through the valley wound a silver stream that rippled sparkling through rich pasture grazed by numerous herds of buffalo and kine

'And in the centre of the stream, a gem in a fit setting, grew the oleander. As far as the eye could reach it filled the stream, whose limpid waters could at intervals only flash back the sunlight through the luxuriant growth. Countless blossoms of delicate rose and warmest crimson, dark green leaves glistening and glancing in the sunshine, ever changing, ever varying with each kiss of the gentle zephyr that sported with them, here glowed the oleander softly, a ruby in a setting of rare emerald' (p. 78)

In *The Heir of the Malik* (1923) Mr Michael John takes an Englishman across the border as he is dissatisfied with

post War India Philip Carr the hero, plays an important part in tribal politics and obliges a local chief by marrying his troublesome granddaughter Philip Carr's adventures before and after his marriage fill up the volume The book is interesting as giving an insight into local and foreign politics of the Borderland and the customs and manners of the people Mr John contrasts the Afghan character with the Indian to the disadvantage of the latter Incidentally he gives us a pleasing picture of the grandeur of Afghan scenery In *The Heir of the Malik* the foreign danger to the peace of the border came in the form of a Turk in *Sons of the Tumult* (1928) by Mr John Dellbridge not only the peace of the border but that of India is threatened by a vast Mohammedan confederation aiming at the conquest of the East under the leadership of a Christian Selwyn (an escaped convict) His loves and adventures on the border are enjoyable But Selwyn the patriot, is unconvincing He is convicted of culpable homicide not amounting to murder in a country where Englishmen generally can do no wrong he escapes from prison after seriously wounding if not killing the warders his companions are men like Peroo who murder and loot as a pastime and as the only honest way of living Though he loves Winifred Vincent he is a *shutur be mahar* where women are concerned He shows no traces of conscience or any moral sense Yet this man is presented to the reader as a great patriot He has unmeasured contempt for the windy Babus who now strut and prance through Hindustan and he succeeds in putting a spoke in the wheel of the chariot which once started might well have overrun India ¹ But why should Selwyn care to save India and wait for a pardon that is grudgingly granted and takes long in coming when with the help of Ghulam Nabis and Nadir Khans of the border he could have easily settled his account with the hoboes and the crooks ² of India ³ The adventures of a gang of

convicts escaped from jail under the leadership of a *gora*, loved by the daughter of a 'pachydermatous bureaucrat', in the romantic land of the tribesmen would have been interesting in themselves

Mrs Theodore Pennell's *Children of The Border* (1926) is a refreshing book. It is partly a tribute to the labours of Mr. Pennell as a missionary doctor in Bannu, 'that Feringhi of whom men tell such wondrous tales', and who treated the Afghans as 'though they were his own'. In addition it is a sympathetic picture of the children of the border, showing insight, knowledge, and imagination. The central theme of the book is the abduction of the border beauty, Margalara, by Khan Zaman, a tall manly youth 'with the clear-cut, delicate profile of a Greek'. Margalara was his *Qibla*, his shrine of beauty and love. She satisfied by her beauty, brain, and charm Khan Zaman's pride as well as his love, and in him she found all she needed of companionship and love and joy. Their love is like a beautiful idyll. But it is disturbed by the hard necessities of life. In spite of faults of construction *The Children of the Border* is a romance much above the average, full of intimate details of border life. The portrait of Margalara is well drawn, and will be remembered as Mrs Pennell's contribution to Anglo-Indian fiction.

46 *Novels of Anglo-Burmese life*

A few novels of Anglo-Burmese life may be noticed. Burmese life is different in many respects from Indian life, one of them being the position of women in Burma. The 'housekeepers' of Burma are mentioned in many novels and they distinguish these novels from other novels of Anglo-Indian life. Life in Burma is a little more free than Anglo-Indian life. Burma is more fascinating than India, more full of natural beauty, and more insidious in its influence.

Among the novelists of Anglo-Burmese life are Mrs Victor Rickard, G. E. Mitton and J. G. Scott, Mr Ray

Carr Miss Jessie A Davidson Mr Humfrey Jordan and Mr C Champion Lowis Mrs B M Croker and Mrs Alice Perrin also have laid the scene of one of their novels in Burma Mr C C Lowis in *Four Blind Mice* (1920) deals with two pairs of husband and wife—reminding one of the lovers in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* Mr Lowis shows some knowledge of the psychology of the Burmese criminal Mrs Victor Rickard lays the scene of *A Fool's Errand* (1921)—a readable story of love—in Rangoon Sir George and Lady Scott are the most important of the novelists of Burmese life *A Frontier Man* (1923) is a composite work by them It has too many characters and fails to hold the reader's attention long The plot centres round the common theme of Anglo Indian novels the clash between the husband's passion for work and his duties at home Sir George Scott (Shway Yoe) published in 1930 a book entitled *Why Not?* It is a story of English society in Burma A great deal of excitement is caused by a series of mysterious jewel robberies and especially by the disappearance of a famous diamond which adorned a statue of Buddha and of the jewels of a wealthy German The mystery interest is skilfully kept up It is one of the few successful detective stories in Anglo Indian fiction *Fetters of Love* (1928) by Jessie A Davidson is a crude and incredible story of revenge the scene of which is laid in Singapore Mwara whose end is tragic is well drawn Mr Ray Carr's *Love in Burma* (1928) has an appropriate sub title *A Tale of the Silken East* Robert Neave in love with Viola Doyle thinking her beyond his reach follows the custom of the country and later on marries Ma Tin But Viola returns to Burma which produces many complications Mr Carr's descriptions of Burma are vivid but his plot is conventional Mr Humfrey Jordan's book *White Masters* (1929) a collection of short stories has already been noticed in Chapter IV It is a good book of Anglo-Burmese life and in the manner of the Rancee of Sarawak

depicts vividly the effect of the silken East on the West. The writer holds that the influence of the East on the character of the Westerner is not healthy.

47 *Novels of missionary life.*

A small group of Anglo-Indian novels is devoted to the life and labours of European and American missionaries in India. The earliest of the writers on this subject is Miss Owenson whose novel, *The Missionary*, was published as early as 1811. Sir William Hunter's *The Old Missionary* (1895) gives an 'idyllic picture of India in the early days of the nineteenth century, with a dignified and touching central figure'.¹ The mission of St. Xavier is celebrated in *The Pearl Fishers* (1907) by Gertrude Hollis.

Mrs. Alice Perrin draws an excellent picture of a missionary household in *Idolatry* (1909). Anne Crivener, John Williams, and Oliver Wray are well drawn. The book is remarkable for its vivid presentation of the 'humiliations, the trials to faith and hope, the small and yet painful anxieties'² of missionary life in India. Some of Mrs. Perrin's other stories also deal with the same subject. *The Vow of Silence* (1920) is a clever psychological study of Harold Williams, a gawky youth who comes out to India as a missionary. It is written in an ironic vein. Mrs. Perrin is not fond of missionaries in India. She admires their selfless labours, but ridicules the narrowness of view which missionary life tends to engender. Mrs. Cartmell, the wife of the missionary, is a good sketch of a narrow-minded woman.

Mrs. Penny's *The Outcaste* (1912) is an important book, describing the conversion of Ananda to Christianity and his persecution. What chiefly leads Ananda to embrace Christianity is the death of his friend Coomara at an aviation show and his repugnance towards the Hindu doctrine of transmigration. What is remarkable about this book is the picture of the treatment meted out to

¹ Baker, *Guide*, p. 129.

² *Times Literary Supplement*, 1909.

Ananda by his friends and relatives. If Mrs Penny has done justice to the courage and patient suffering of the convert, she has not failed to show the terrible consequences of his action. Ananda admits that he did not consider how seriously it would affect his father's peace of mind and his health. Even Alderbury is touched by the misery of the parents and 'realizes the havoc that had been wrought in one of the happiest homes of India. Eola Wenaston's view of Ananda's change of faith probably expresses Mrs Penny's own human attitude.

'I am of the opinion that he might have had more consideration for his father's feelings. Why should existing relations that seem so satisfactory be disturbed? There is a time for all things. It is too soon to ask educated India to accept Christianity the way is studded with such colossal difficulties' (p. 157).

Mrs Penny has given us in Mrs Hulver Dr Wenaston's housekeeper one of the finest creations in Anglo Indian fiction. She was a widow and had been married thrice—a fact that her acquaintances were not permitted to forget. Her dress is old-fashioned—a skirt that gave plenty of room and spread like a bell over her feet—a bodice that showed no fashionable bulge in sleeve or shoulder. She is intelligent and full of talk and is in the habit of interlarding her spicy conversations with quotations from one or other of her three (dead) Williams. The first William left her some property, the second gave her a son, and the third the pleasure of rating him. Her conversational powers may be judged from the passage quoted below. She was very anxious to see Miss Eola Wenaston married and is irritated by her remark that she (Mrs Hulver) was very much married.

Indeed miss! I was no more married than I ought to have been. To have been less married with my three husbands wouldn't have been respectable. And I am sure it has helped me along. I should have been a poor thing without it. As William—that was my second—used to say. Humble wedlock is better than proud singleness. Marriage is like a good

pair of boots to a woman. It will carry her through fair weather and foul. If the boots wear out before their time the best thing to do is to get another pair''' (p. 138)

Her views on missionary labours in India will be read with interest

'“I didn't say that they were not doing good. I left it open. As William—that was my first—used to say when the native overseers had too big a grasp on the profits ‘You can't wash a crow white nor expect anything of him but a croak.’ It's the thought of the millions and millions of heathen in India that is apt to stagger one. It's like trying to empty a tank with a teaspoon. However, as William—that was my second—used to say when I was down-hearted about the way anything was going ‘You lay your brick and lay it sound and leave the rest to others. No man ever built a church steeple all by himself and yet old England is full of churches and steeples.’ Anyway, I shouldn't like to be a missionary's wife. I could dress up to it, I could feed up to it, but I couldn't stand the converts trapesing through the compound and hanging about the verandahs. I shouldn't feel as if the house belonged to me”’ (p. 150)

Mrs Penny's disquisitions on Hinduism and Christianity will please neither Hindus nor Christians. The preservation of Hinduism, she says, is due to its wonderful system, its width and breadth.

'Hinduism preaches on one hand an asceticism which is acceptable to the most exacting fanatic. On the other it gives a licence, in the name of religion and the worship of Kali, that appeals irresistibly to the lowest and most sensual side of man. Hitherto its isolation and its marvellous power of absorbing other religious systems have been a tower of strength, but it cannot be saved much longer from the inrush of the modern spirit and stands in danger of being broken down' (p. 172)

The three props of Hinduism, transmigration, the unquestioned authority of the Brahmans and their Vedas, and the Caste System are crumbling away, and the reformation of Hinduism can only come through Christianity.

Christianity will develop all the germs that lie fallow in Hinduism and will throw light in the dark places. Why is the west to monopolise a revelation that was originally given to the east? (p. 22.)

The widowing ceremony of Dorama the wife of Ananda, is described in Mrs Penny's best vein and shows her intimate acquaintance with the life of Hindus of South India.

Mrs Penny introduces a few missionary characters in *The Snare's Curse* (1922). It deals with the conversion of a high caste Hindu, Savalu. Now Savalu had two wives. What is he to do? Christianity allows only one wife and he is not prepared to renounce either. Mrs Penny's solution is simple: she kills the first wife Thiara.

Most of the novels describing missionary life in India, when not written by missionaries, are satirical in tone. Kipling's *Lispeth* is a satire. Mrs Perrin is evidently no great admirer of missionaries. Mr Henry Bruce in two novels *The Song of Surrender* and *The Temple Girl* satirizes the Ritualist Mission in India. In *The Song of Surrender* he draws a funny portrait of the Wobbling Bishop of Bombay and ridicules the Mission Examination Board at Poona. In *The Temple Girl* he gives us two more sketches of missionaries—of Canon Payne or Soapy Sam and the Reverend Hugh Law. Like Dr Fulton Mr Bruce cannot stomach Soapy Sam. The Reverend Hugh Law heartily enjoys the good things of the world. Excepting cards and dancing he regards the pleasures of the world as less dangerous to religious preoccupation than the materialism usually resulting from medical studies.¹ His was the idlest soul that ever incarnated on earth. He discouraged active work of any kind and exhorted people to stand aside humbly undergoin

Miss Margaret Wilson is certain to rank among fiction. It records the e

¹ p. 206

² p. 209

American lady attached to a Mission for the Depressed Classes in a District of the Panjab. The intimate details and the realistic descriptions of life in an Indian *busti*, Aiyarianwala, are largely autobiographical, and Miss Davida Baille is a thin disguise for Miss Margaret Wilson. The book has no plot and is loosely constructed. The love of Davida Baille for John Ramsey and the 'elopement' of the beautiful Taj and her marriage to Rabindra Nath do not constitute a plot. But the book pleases the reader for its delightful incidents. The episode of the theft of the poinsettia plant and its restoration, of the gift of a pillow to the Begum, of the destruction of the small flower garden of the Indian Christian pastor by the village rowdies, his prayers, the time-table of Miss Bhose, the Head Mistress of the girls' school, and many more episodes, remind one partly of Mrs Gaskell's *Cranford*, and partly of the *Scenes of Clerical Life*. They show the same knowledge of village life, the same insight into the activities of humble, illiterate village people and the same touch of humour.

Miss Margaret Wilson's book is full of cleverly drawn character-sketches and acute observations. Miss Munroe, the First Lady, is described as a

'pukka ferishta—a slight, frail, incorrigibly prim and genteel lady, repeatedly and voluminously skirted and underskirted to the ground in spite of all temperatures, collared to the chin, always gloved to the finger tips, shaded by an enormous khaki-coloured pith hat from underneath which her face gleamed out slightly illumined fanatically perhaps by its zeal, softened by its mild direct eyes, and by a very large and beautifully tender mouth' (p. 87)

The esteem in which she was held was based as much upon her 'years of overflowing kindness, as upon her reputation for that high and awful attribute—chastity'. Miss Bhose was proud of 'her virginity, her seven languages, her successful great school and her Brahmin descent'. She had espoused the cause of the down-trodden but

without stepping from her heights She had no scruples about eating with sweeper Christians but had skill in avoiding occasions when it was necessary And with them she had always included in her thoughts alas even the most highly descended Moslems ever baptized into Christianity (p 252)

When Rabindra Nath a distant relation of Miss Bhose, runs away with the beautiful schoolmistress Taj who was a convert from Mohammedanism she does not listen to the arguments of Davida who urged that even the royal families of Europe needed a little new blood now and then and says

But I don't think why my half brother in law's sister's husband's family needed a carrion-eating infusion (p 254)

According to Miss Margaret Wilson the missionaries are lacking in common sense¹ Present day missionaries are thus described

Some of them had recanted their early faith They saved what they could of their salaries now Some had grown discouraged and gone home—a very few Some had to justify economically starvation standards of living Some had revolted from intimacy with India The farther we live separated from them mentally and physically the better they argued in disgust We can't lower ourselves to get too near to them (p 29)

Miss Wilson does not believe in conversions She finds the village superstitious in spite of Christianity several Christian children are seen wearing amulets against snake bites²

Miss Wilson's description of the village remind us of Mr Edmund Candler's description of Mograon These village *bustis* are extremely dull

where the streets the earth the houses the wells were one unvarying khaki—the khak being the Indian word for clay—from Khak we are made—where all the inhabitants were clothed in hand spun cotton grey and grainy or dyed indigo blue (pp 48-9)

She explains the fondness of the villagers for litigation by their desire for diversion and amusement

'Being illiterate, it had no books It had no newspapers It had nothing like football, base-ball, tennis, golf It had no theatres It had no movies It had no wireless The proceedings of the court room took the place of all these' (p 203)

Miss Wilson's second book, *Trousers of Taffeta A Tale of a Polygamous City* (1929) is written as carefully as *Daughters of India* It is an intimate study of Moslem life behind the purdah as seen by mission doctors Taj, Rashid, Bilkis, the Rani and Nuro, are creations true to life There is practically no plot and yet the book is above the average It emphasizes that our women are born to be mothers, or they live for what they call 'Hope' Miss Wilson avoids the pitfalls of Miss Mayo because she writes with sympathy and understanding. She describes with a deft pen 'the intoxicating glory' of the colours of women's costumes at a purdah party

'So there flowed and flapped and wrinkled and twinkled before our dazzled eyes, colours that have no English name because they have no occidental existence, the purple of distant Himalayan foot-hills when they are green with spring foliage, the bronze-coloured greens of Kashmiri dawns, the rose-red orange colours of desert sunsets, the memories of Moghul rubies in moonlight, rainy twilights in Persian gardens, mists clearing away from snow-topped mountains after storms, phosphorescence on starry tropical seas' (pp 185-6)

Yet Miss Wilson thinks

'our civilization's sober fruit, corsets and soap, our less picturesque conventions of propriety are more sane than this opiate beauty of hue' (p 186)

Yet A More Excellent Way (1929) by Dr. Mary Scharlieb is a missionary novel Basil Rivers, the son of Lord Rivers, renouncing his career, lands, title, love, and country becomes a Roman Catholic priest in a Benedictine monas-

tery at Benares. He converts a highly religious Hindu family. It is in Christianity we are told that the ancient religion of the Hindus finds its development and final expression.¹ Hinduism may be an excellent way of serving God, but Christianity is a more excellent way, Hinduism being a preparation and not a fulfilment. Dr Scharlieb is a devout Christian but a bad novelist. The only valuable portrait in the book is that of Lakshmi Amal, an ideal Hindu housewife 'a slender graceful woman, dignified by her simplicity and by her unconsciousness of self'.

The Splendour of God (1930) by Honore Willsie Morrow, is the latest of the missionary novels so far published. The story deals with the first Baptist mission in the East and is a tribute to the work, service and trials of Judson, a great missionary and his wife in Burma. He could not work in India owing to the East India Company's opposition to missionary activities in its territories.

It would seem that even now missionary activities are not regarded with favour in Government circles. We are told in *Wine of Sorrow* that 'Government viewed Christianity as a most dangerous innovation and was loth to expose the Hindu to its contagion'.² Mr L. Beresford writes in *The Second Rising*

Personally I believe that if our rule in India is ever finally laid in its coffin the church by the tactlessness of its representatives will have assisted to nail down the lid. (p. 22)

Miss Mitchen in Mrs Savi's *Rulers of Men* complains that Christian men in India do not use their 'privileges for the glorification of the Almighty and help the pagans instead'.³ Mrs Savi and Mr Henry Bruce show how missionaries do not scruple to kidnap pagan children in the service of the Lord.

Another conclusion suggested by scattered references to Indian missions in Anglo Indian fiction is the futility of conversion. Mrs Savi says in *Mistress of Herself* that

there is not 'a greater rascal, a more unprincipled humbug, when he is one, than a so-called native convert'.¹ She tells us that even native pastors do not hesitate to tell lies.² In *Torchlight* we are told that native Christians have no backbone, no spirit, 'nor can they by any chance speak the truth' We may wonder with Mrs Savl 'what the missions imagine they are doing' ³ In *Rulers of Men* the mission at Amabagh is proud because it had provided the English residents with *ayahs*, *dhobies*, *malies*, cobblers, and blacksmiths.

'But it was a discouraging fact that a very small percentage of those who left the mission to support themselves by their own industry, ever continued to remain Christians . their conversion was not a matter of conviction but of convenience' (p 107)

48. *Life in the mofussil* Miss Mountain and Mr. Hilton Brown

Miss Isobel Mountain undertakes to describe another aspect of Anglo-Indian life, the life of the mem-sahib in the *mofussil* Mr H Stewart Macpherson in an article on the same subject says :

'The Muffassal is no place for the social butterfly It demands a self-reliance and infinitude of resources on which city life makes no call' (*Calcutta Review*, 1913)

Miss Isobel Mountain's *Salaam* (1917) is a painstaking record of the experiences of Joan Danver in an out-of-the-way station in North India The book is a reply to those women who, sitting in their English boudoirs, warn English girls against the life of frivolity, luxury, and pleasures that India offers In her book Miss Mountain has given us a long list of discomforts and inconveniences

¹ p 133

² p 115

³ p 148 In this connexion attention may be drawn to a novel, *Hindu Heaven* (1933), by Mr Max Wylie In a vivid and vigorous style, Mr Wylie, whose knowledge is derived from actual experience, satirizes the activities of American missionaries in India and the hypocrisy of Indian converts to Christianity

that Englishwomen have to face in India—the unpunctual trains the noisy and dirty stations the indignity of confronting the world of crowded platforms *en déshabille* the lonely life in a *moffussil* bungalow, the strange bathroom, the curious bedroom with its numerous naked looking doors the troublesome duty of making your own curtains and even some articles of clothing the *dirzee* who does not understand you, and the bearer who is inherently stupid the uninformed *chaprassi* who calmly tells a caller that the mem sahib is in her bath and the cook who would put four dozen eggs in a cake where four would have been sufficient What do Englishmen and Englishwomen at home know of the depreciation of the rupee of the toughness of the *murghi*, of the uncertainty of life in India where death hovers with outstretched wings ever ready to fold in his embrace those who walk in the valley of his Shadow, of the heat during the day and the awful snores of the punkah wallah at night of the cries of the brain fever bird, of the onck and umff of the brahmini bull of the awful dust storm and the scorching sands of the pestilence that walketh in darkness, of the floods that break the *bunds* of the tornado that flies away with the ceiling of the bungalow the lightning that sets fire to it and the rain that soaks every dress of the mem sahib of the ink bottle that costs eighteenpence over and above the sixpence which was its real value, of the thieves that rob you with impunity and the police that pester you with useless inquiries of the tragedy of motherhood without a doctor or with one who takes a day to reach his patient, of the dirty and vulgar ayahs and of the separation of the child from the mother and of the wife from the husband? Such is the experience of one who has actually lived in India

A book similar in substance but better written is *Dictators Limited* (1923) by Mr Hilton Brown describing the experiences of a new Assistant Collector and his wife in the south of India George Ingram the would be

Dictator, arrives in India as that unpopular figure, 'the already married assistant' Madras strikes Ingram as an elusive town. Presumably it exists somewhere—what Ingram sees is 'a succession of disconnected places rather than a place itself'. His first encounter with the Chief Secretary, which the author calls the Battle of Beale, left him with a 'firm and rooted hatred of His Majesty's Civil Service in India'. He is posted as Assistant Collector and Magistrate of Kavutapur, a place where there was not only no house, but even no hotel and no shop. He loses his temper because from the first 'the native displayed a vast and unexpected capacity for annoying and petty irritation'. While he finds the 'Aryan Brother' disappointingly difficult, he feels that there was something wrong with the Europeans one met at the club. 'Hide-bound they seemed to be—lacking in initiative, terribly wrapped up and entangled in their own petty daily round of dull duties and insipid amusements'. The 'headquarter stations' seem to have been devised by a malicious providence.

'Twenty people absolutely incompatible in tastes, brains, manners, topics—everything—jammed down together and expected to agree. Two or three ill-natured women to keep the ball rolling. Little hells' (p. 183).

The heat of India is a new and a terrifying experience to him. The clothes feel as if they had been taken out of an oven, the bedstead is hot to touch, the punkah only blows waves of hot air, and the evening ride is like pushing one's way through a furnace. He finds that the India of his experience is not the India of books. It upsets all 'one's cut and dried classifications, it plays hell with one's Relative Values'.¹ His daily task, though not very interesting, did not lack variety—'a more amazing farrago altogether, a Bedlamite diversity'.

'It ranged from immense questions of policy and administration . . . to niggling details and pettifoggish formalities

that demanded close and exhausting attention. One checked and balanced the entire Revenue Accounts of the Division and one gravely sanctioned a rupee's worth of kerosene oil for the use of one's office. One spoke one moment of roads and bridges and large enterprises and the next of repairs to the kitchen of the local Fund Hospital at Ennampetta (p. 254)

What with heat and the lying cringing untrustworthy natives with Cobbey grinning through the blue black stubble of an indifferent shave with ayahs who administered opium to babes with brutes of servants, cow people and dhobies, with the excitement of war and the dismal anti-climax of its effect in India with native riots and his wife's illness George Ingram the would be Dictator feels that for him the whole process of India had been one long grinding and levelling. He loses heart and admits himself beaten.

Dictators Limited is an interesting account of the life of a civil servant in the lonely stations of India. Cobbey and Bett are well drawn types of Indian Collectors. A remarkable feature of the book is the characterization of Shiva Rao in whom Mr. Hilton Brown presents one of the most insoluble conundrums East asks of West.¹ Shiva Rao was a slim, good looking and presentable young man. He spoke perfectly with a very pleasant smile and according to Edith, Ingram had the best manners of any one they had met in India. He was a public school man a real decent chap. This cultured anglicized Indian belonging to a respectable family is treated like a pariah by the small Anglo Indian community of the place. He is refused admission to the local club because he is a native. His immediate officer Mr. Quorn the District Superintendent of Police invites him to dinner and Mrs. Quorn had to go out that evening. George and Edith Ingram try to cultivate him and befriend him but find themselves in hot water because of the prejudices of their

countrymen So far Mr Brown has delineated Shiva Rao with real sympathy, but in the portions of the story which follow, it is obvious that he has lost his bearing Shiva Rao, cut off from his countrymen because of his education, position and tastes, despised by Englishmen, is a tragic figure His degradation does not fit in with the story. It is too sudden to be convincing.

In another novel, *Susanna* (1926), Mr Hilton Brown depicts another aspect of Anglo-Indian life, the life of the planter in India The plot of the book is the common story of an unhappy marriage, separation followed by reconciliation But as a study of an unconventional girl, tired of what she calls 'Bremnerism'—the life of pretences and prejudices, of limitations and religious inhibitions, of long-winded graces and stock ritual conversations—and tired even of her marriage with Jimmy Rait (a coffee planter in Vayala, near the 'real levels of Mysore'), the book is admirable Her marriage is, in fact, a jump from 'Bremnerism' into Bohemianism To Susanna the contrast between her cramped life in Scotland and the 'free, open, give-and-take life' in India is very great She enjoys the 'Race Week' of the planters of Vayala, 'a sort of Mi-Carême in the middle of Lent that ran for the balance of the year',¹ a week of gymkhanas, tennis, cricket, golf, races, bands, dancing, sunshine and moonlight, a week in which one had done everything except sleep After the merry 'Race Week' come the weary weeks of the monsoons which were followed by weeks of strenuous work, when the planters go 'into crop' and casting gaiety aside, slave from ten to fourteen hours a day Susanna is bored by this life and is not happy with her husband, who seems to prefer his horse to his wife Her next phase of life in the 'No Man's Land', separated from her husband, and earning her livelihood by teaching music and dancing, is bitter and disagreeable As the owner of the estate of Glen-simbri in the district of Vayala, she returns to India, and

after a rising of Kotwa labourers, engineered by non-cooperating agitators is reconciled to her husband. She has learnt her lesson thoroughly.

If you go against conventions you go against nature really and you can't do that (p. 348)

In spite of its commonplace plot and the moral tag *Susanna* is one of the better type of novels. *Susanna* is the portrait of a complex woman misunderstood because of her complexity and essential womanhood. The simple style befits the story. The first part of the book skilfully etches character and background. It is mainly psychological. The last part is exciting and sensational.

As a glimpse into the life and labours of the planters it may be compared with Mr. John Eyton's *Expectancy* and *Diffidence*. Mr. Eyton's appreciation of the life of Indian planters is acute. One of his stories, *A Planter's Home*, is concerned with the same theme and is written with feeling. The importance of the planters in India is well emphasized.

Patriotic poets have not extolled them and history passes them by. Their statues do not smile or frown down dusty thoroughfares and they are but rarely found in the roll of the Star of India but nevertheless they have one most enduring title to fame—they have held on.

The officials come and go and make the best or worst of it before they take their pensions and go for ever. Much they may achieve in India but never one thing—Home. That is left to the planters and is perhaps the greatest achievement of all. (*The Daring Fakir* p. 92)

A Planter's Home is a tribute to planters' steadfastness and sacrifice for the sake of England. They are Englishmen who have made their homes in India and have contributed not a little to the stability of British rule in India. Mr. Eyton deplores the attitude of the English towards them, an attitude of indifference, if not of actual contempt. He regrets that they are confused with and treated as Eurasians.

The author compares the bungalows of Englishmen with planters' homes

"There was a spirit, too, in the house, which is seldom met with in the Englishman's abode in India. Our bungalows are but temporary shells, passed from hand to hand, seldom beautified, never adorned with our best, little is given to these, and little do they give back. They have no abiding sense of rest or of peace, no history and no individuality. But here there was a difference. If ever a house did, this house reflected its owner. . . a house of gentleness" (ibid., p. 98)

The same sympathy for the planter runs through the pages of *Expectancy* and *Diffidence*, though it does not form the theme of these novels. Nicholas Vaine, who has a jammer near Bhimtal, welcomes his orphaned cousin Jimmy in the following words:

"You must look on this as your home. What's more, you must call it home. No boggling about the bush—H-o-m-e, Home. They say in England that you can't build a home in India, you can only build a house. That's wrong, like most of the things they say. You can make any house a home if you put enough into it." (*Expectancy*, p. 299)

Nicholas's enthusiasm for the fruit industry in India is catching. He advises his son-in-law to take up the business and to settle down in India. In Nicholas the reader is given a character-sketch of an enthusiastic and prosperous planter who plays an important part in the trade and commerce of India.

"Lord, James, this is nothing," says Nicholas to his son-in-law, referring to his plantations. "What's fifty acres? It won't end here. I've been dreaming dreams—always do this time of the year, who doesn't?—and by Heaven, fruit's the wonder of the world! Colour, taste, shape, smell—you can't beat good fruit on any ground. It always strikes me that the Almighty must have been pretty disgusted when he looked down and saw Adam and Eve gnawing a bone instead of admiring that apple, eh? Regretted the fuss He'd made, eh? And here's India, nearest to Eden with hardly a fruit of her own worthy of

the name and hardly one acre in a million given to growing God fearing fruits from self respecting countries Look at Australia Tasmania New Zealand—no better climate than up here no better sun or soil—baby countries too infants in arms compared with this hoary old lady—and they re simply flooded with fruit Don't know what to do with it And it s all the work of the last half century or so And then look at India—the one supreme fruit market of the world—or ought to be
(*Diff'rence* pp 119- 0)

Not only do Nicholas Vaine and planters like him offer a home to Englishmen not only do they contribute so much to the commercial prosperity of the country of their adoption but they are a guarantee for the continuance of British rule in India They have a large stake in the country and therefore they are booted for India They cannot subscribe to any tomfool policy of signing away India to the babus If it came to that, Nicholas Vaine would raise a regiment and take what he could in the old style

The contemptuous attitude of the heaven born and military services towards other services and especially the commercial classes is referred to in many novels It forms the subject of Mr Edward Thompson's third novel *Night Falls on Sina's Hill* In this book the object of contempt is not a settler but a military officer who is forced to lead the life of an exile in the jungles of Trisulbari At Gangapur as in most civil and military stations Mr Thompson tells us the unofficial Englishman came almost on sufferance

like a countryman visiting his cathedral city on a day not the market day (p 3)

John Carmichael Lyon the pride of the proud Mian Light Horse stationed at Gangapur in 1876 was sure of rapid promotion from carefree subalternity to hale, cheery brigadierhood But as it turns out, he narrowly escaped a court martial and is permitted to resign the Queen's Commission as a favour Why? Because he had dared to do what was the greatest offence according to the moral code of the Mianis he had married the beautiful Hester

Morrison whose father 'was just on the fringe of recognisable social status, as the Mianis saw things' After leaving the Mianis, he buries himself in his Zemindari work along with his two daughters, Kitty and Nicky, wasting his 'force and fineness' in an uncongenial atmosphere. The past not only embitters his life, but that of his daughters. Though Nicolette, unlike her sister, grows up like a wood-sprite, 'a lily in delicacy and frailty', and loves her jungle life, the miseries of her father and his opposition to her intimacy with young Norman poison her life. Miss Nicolette's pleasure in her forest surroundings in places reminds us of Hilda Hamar and her brother-in-law Alden, whose passion for Indian forests, as he himself confesses, saved him from certain madness Felvus reminds us of Hamar The book in style and in treatment, like the other novels of Mr Thompson, is distinctly superior to the greater number of novels included in this survey Miss Nicolette's character sketch is a masterpiece of word-painting

CHAPTER VII

NOVELS OF MIXED MARRIAGES AND EURASIAN LIFE

A CONSIDERABLE number of Anglo Indian novels deal with mixed marriages and the problems arising out of them. Some of them take for their plot the marriage of an Englishman with an Indian girl, some depict the

49a In the days of Clive and Warren Hastings when not so numerous as now who came to India did not return to their motherland it was not uncommon for Englishmen to marry Indian girls. There was little prejudice against such marriages and there is no suggestion in any novel that such marriages were unhappy. But with the beginning of the second quarter of the nineteenth century such unions began to be regarded with disfavour. In *The Baboo and Other Tales* (1834) there is given an account of Captain Forester's marriage with a Moslem Begum. His countrymen look askance at it but do not speak of it as anything abnormal. In *Seeta* the disapproval is more pronounced. Even in the nineteenth century the prejudice does not seem to be deep rooted. Kipling did not deal with this question at length. But from a study of his short stories *Yoked with an Unbeliever*, *Georgie Porgie* and *Without Benefit of Clergy* it is clear that he did not regard such marriages as extraordinary. He is conscious of the tragedy of such unions but he looks upon them purely from a human point of view. No considerations of race or prestige stand in the way of the natural development of these simple stories. In *Lispeth* his sympathies are with the poor despised hill girl in *Yoked with an Unbeliever*, the Indian

girl makes a decent man of her husband. In *Georgie-Poorgie*, Kipling reaches the heights of his art when depicting the despair of the Burman 'housekeeper'.

In *A Princess of Islam* (1897), Mr J. W. Sherer shows a sympathetic understanding of Eastern women, their capacity for love and self-sacrifice. It recounts the story of a Mohammedan princess Nooroon-Nissa, who was given in marriage to George Wilton by her brother, the Nawab of Ling. The description of the Mohammedan marriage is accurate and interesting. The marriage was not happy, and race prejudices embittered the life of both. The object of the book, however, is not so much to discuss the question of mixed marriages as to study (in the words of the author) 'a single female character'. He has not created an ideal, but he has admirably succeeded in understanding an alien woman. Even Lucy, who in Nooroon-Nissa's love and charity saw the influence of Christ, had to confess that

'We in England underrate the force of character of Eastern women. I believe the influence of a female mind in a native household is often paramount' (p. 308)

With the beginning of the twentieth century, the prejudice against mixed marriages became deeper and more pronounced. The hero of a sensational novel, *Fitch and His Fortunes* (1898) by G. Dick, loves a rich and beautiful zemindarin, Savitra Bai. His love for the fair Indian is not approved by his Anglo-Indian friends, according to whom 'cheek by jowl, not lip to lip' is the maxim of the Indian Empire. But Fitch evolves a more satisfying argument.

'If well-born Englishmen and high-caste ladies of India wedded it would bring about the English at home, a wonderful fusion, a hybrid mongrel lot, if you like, Norman-Dane-Anglo-Saxon, but the peer of the West, as the Eurasian would be the peer of the East, and not the by-product of the lower classes of each proud race as he is at present' (p. 190)

The author, who shares the prejudice of his countrymen, says that Fitch never thought of the

vice versa business the white girl wedding the native nor of the fact that the Englishman now goes home on three months leave for his *menus plaisirs* and that the Zenana compounds in the older bungalows have now therefore no *raison d'être* that unions like that of the Princess of the Mogulai and the English gentleman whose descendants are not without honour in the land now play no part in the system of life (p 190)

Fate however saves Fitch from his folly when the Fair Indian commits suicide

It is a strange coincidence that this device of killing or putting aside the Indian girl is followed by almost all Anglo Indian novelists who have tackled this problem In Mrs Steel's *On the Face of the Waters* Zora dies early setting Jim Douglas free to love another man's wife In *Self and the Other* (1901) by 'Victoria Crosse' Narayanah Chandmad the heaven sent guest of Francis Heath is removed in time by plague fortunately for the future of the Indian Civil Service of which he was destined to become a prominent member In *The Jewel of Malabar* Kamayala enters a convent and saves Sir John Bennville from the consequence of his un-English infatuation In *Flame of the Forest* by Alice Eustace (1927) the ever watchful Government of India, ruled by Lord Dering diplomatically removes the English lover of Princess Flame to England In *The Scorpions' Nest* by Joan Angus and Hope Fielding (1929) Anarcullu who is determined to marry

The re-
Indian girl
Malabar (1929) by Mr Donald Sinderby may be studied as typical of such novels It is a good story well told in which the author uses to good effect the many interesting aspects of the Moplah Rebellion of 1921 He gives a vivid picture of the wild country of Malabar that emerald gem of sad beauty in the south west of India The book shows how strong is the disapproval of military India when an English officer of the rank and family of Sir John Bennville

permits himself to fall in love with a beautiful Nayar widow (Kamayala), 'with haunting brown eyes' The reasons for such disapproval are that an Englishman cannot marry a black woman, that it is simply not done, that he would have to live in 'this God-forsaken country' for the rest of his life, that Indian girls are dangerous and put something in one's drink, that his children would be 'half-chats', that he has a decent English line to keep up, and that an officer of the Musketeers married to a native is an unheard-of horror¹ The Colonel of the Musketeers is genuinely grieved at the obstinacy of Bennville His appeal is powerfully, even poetically worded

"I don't think you quite realise, Bennville, what it means to be married to a native woman It means that you will lose friends, home, and everything that is worth living for to an Englishman You would not be likely to make friends with the other natives Oil and water won't mix! Consider what it would mean never to see England again——" (p 225)

He paused and then continued with a note of appeal in his voice

"Never to see the brown copses and frozen ponds in winter Never to see the sun set on the greenest happiest land in the world Nor to see the woods carpeted with bluebells in Spring Never to hear the song of the robin and the blackbird again, nor to smell the violets and burning wood and all the 'farm housey' smells of Old England Believe me my boy—and I've travelled far and seen many lands—there's not a country in the whole wide world which is a quarter as beautiful, or a quarter as good to live in, as dear muddy, foggy old Blighty in the roaring North Sea!" (p 225)

The appeal does credit to the far-travelled Colonel, and is a good specimen of the author's style The reader would not have been surprised after this if Sir John Bennville had overcome his infatuation But he does not, and disappoints the Colonel who is determined to save him

¹ pp 140-1

from himself. But what actually happens is something of an anti climax. What a Colonel could not do is done by a Sister of Mercy. Suddenly Kamayala enters a convent, turns Christian and renounces him for whose sake she had already renounced everything. If her conversion were not so sudden her sacrifice would have been more intelligible. As it happens her reason for her action is not convincing.

I must not keep thee from thy fate she wrote to Bennville
With me as wife thou couldst not be a great general and thy
son a great dewan as God wishes it (p. 320)

And what is more surprising is that this English baronet who had risked his life for her sake faced the jeers of his officers, opposed his Colonel and resigned his job. This hero without any hesitation and without even a melodramatic scene of remonstrance allows her to enter the convent and considers everything a dream.

The only novel of any importance in which a union between an Englishman and an Indian girl is actually brought about is *Lilamani* (1910) by Mrs. Maud Diver. She calls it a study in possibilities. Nevil Sinclair, a young representative of an old English family who is remarkable for his artistic genius, falls in love with a high caste Hindu girl, Lilamani, the daughter of Sir Lakshman Singh amidst the romantic surroundings of Antibes. Lilamani is a daughter of new India, slender and upright as a palm, proud, wilful and not well disciplined. Mrs. Diver understands her well and knows that

So essentially is an Indian woman the product of that hidden sanctuary of home that a sudden uprooting involves the snapping of a hundred delicate fibres, the entire readjustment of thought, feeling and conduct to the complex, unstable elements of the outer world (p. 20)

Mrs. Diver is fully alive not only to the possibilities of such a marriage but to its consequences. Though she does not bring out the effect of such a union in the distant home

of Lilamani in Rajputana, we may guess from the letter from Mata Ji, which Sir Lakshman conceals from the readers, the consternation that the news of such a marriage must have caused in India. The author vividly paints the pain and surprise with which the news was received by the whole Sinclair clan. In their lack of imagination, pride and prejudice, they are not much superior to the caste- and custom-ridden men and women of India. Sinclair's aunt is well drawn. She embodies the disgust and disapproval of the whole clan. She nearly succeeds in bringing about a tragedy, which perhaps would have been a more natural dénouement of such a union. But Mrs. Diver writes with a purpose, and she has chosen to ignore the tragedy inherent in such a situation. She moves about in a realm of romance, and smoothes the path of the lovers whenever evil clouds begin to threaten their married life. She has a genuine admiration for Indian ideals of wifely duty, and believes that such unions need not always end in tragedy. But what is possible is different from what is probable.

The story is full of dramatic possibilities of which Mrs. Diver takes full advantage. Lilamani and Jane show that she has a considerable gift of character-drawing. Sir Lakshman Singh is a lovable old man, but not quite typical of the Rajputs who fought the Great Moghuls to save the honour of their wives and daughters. The author tries to place herself in the position of an Indian and to overcome the prejudices of her Anglo-Indian environment. She succeeds in this, but not completely. Her chivalrous hero hesitates when Sir Lakshman Singh inquires 'how should it fare with a high-caste Hindu who should ask an English father what you ask from me?' Nevil Sinclair's answer is disappointing but characteristic of the race to which he and Mrs. Diver belong.

“But surely—there is a difference. Indians admit it, tacitly, when they speak of Western views and customs as enlightened, one, say your daughter's case, seems an advance the other—

if you'll forgive me—would be in a measure retrogression
(p. 134)

Sir Lakshman Singh probably thinking of the happiness of his daughter forgives Nevil Sinclair

Mr Reginald Campbell in *Brown Wife or White* (1925) reminds one of Kipling's *Georgie Porgie* but lacks its tragic intensity. The only outstanding figures in this badly planned novel are the elephant Poo Nygrun and the brown wife Chan Som, who proves the truth of a remark made by Denton's predecessor Cranbrook.

The brown woman and the white woman are at heart alike
 1 1 1 man takes
 and peace
 white one

he is doing the same and the odds are he ll lose the stakes
(p 110)

49b The second aspect of the problem of mixed marriages, that is the marriage of an English girl with an Indian has been discussed in a number of novels. This problem was not of any importance in the nineteenth century. But with the spread of education and the growing number of Indian visitors to Europe it began to claim attention. Such marriages are invariably condemned by Anglo Indian writers.

Mrs Penny takes up this question in *A Mixed Marriage* (1903) and other novels published later. She does not want to prevent such marriages. They are inevitable. They were not liked twenty five years ago ' she writes in *A Question of Love* but that is a thing of the past. She however insists that a mixed marriage of this character is justified only when the conditions are such as to ensure the domestic happiness of the chief parties concerned. She feels for cultured Indians like Anwar ud Din Andhra Roy and Ravaniah. She realizes the pathos of their isolation. She knows that such men having lived in England, cannot remain content with the conditions ruling

the zenana of the present day. They need something higher and better. 'Such men have progressed by leaps and bounds, and the women seem to have stood still', she writes in *A Question of Love*¹. Such Indians desire a companion for the mind as well as the body. She is right when she says that an Indian wife is either a cook in the kitchen or a mother in the nursery. 'As for companionship the Hindu woman does not know the meaning of the word'². But with all her sympathy and shrewdness, she is unable to bring about a union between the East and the West, even in fiction. She brings the Indian gentleman and the English girl together, only to separate them in the end. In all her novels of mixed marriages her method of treatment, her outlook and her conclusions are the same.

The framework of her stories is something like this. An Indian, cultured, enlightened, more or less Europeanized and belonging to a rich, if not a princely family, gets to know a beautiful, intelligent English girl, either in England or India. They fall in love with each other, thereby exciting the jealousy or anger of some Anglo-Indian lover or guardian of the girl. Some sensational incident is then introduced—devil-worship or a local riot involving the girl in danger. Finally the English girl is married to her Anglo-Indian admirer and the Indian is left alone to realize that his desire to marry an English girl was wicked and impossible—'a desire of the moth for the star'. Of course there are many slight variations of this theme. When the English girl actually returns the love of the Indian, her eyes are opened in the harem or the zenana. Not infrequently she learns too late that her Indian admirer had already a wife.

Mrs Penny's Indian heroes are all princes or nobles, well-educated men of culture and refinement. Mir Yacoob, Rajah Narayan Chakravarti Krishna Swamy of Shivapore, Anwar-ud-Din, Andhra Roy and Ravaniah. As regards her heroines, Lorina Carlyon of Winston Hall is a 'Lotus

¹ p 152² *A Question of Love*, p 215

in the land of the Rose Victoria Wingrave is a rare poem' the recitation of which awakes the spiritual part of Anwar's mentality Susie and Beattie and Joyce Armour also are extremely pretty and lovable English girls They are not indifferent towards their Indian lovers but no marriage takes place Mrs Penny shirks the logical development of her plots Mir Yacoob is separated from Lorina because she could not understand a country where a faithful and single hearted Indian wife like Lalbee could plead to her rival against herself Lalbee's earnest simple and sincere words we are told hurt Lorina's spirit more than all the attempts which had been made upon her life And she returns to England with her eyes opened¹ Similarly Miss Dersingham leaves the Rajah of Shivapore in a fit of righteous indignation because he in spite of his promise to her and knowledge of better things had identified himself with the semi savagery of his ignorant subjects Victoria Wingrave prefers a human cocoanut, Brian Fairoake to the cultured courageous Anwar because of Birth Race Religion²

The two the East and the West are so diametrically opposed it is an impossibility for the men of the West to give a faithful representation of the inner workings of the mind of a man of the East (*One of the Best* p 53)

Intimacy of Indians with English girls is resented because

Privileges of this kind fill the Indians with pride and make them bumptious (*ibid* p 62)

In *A Question of Colour* (1926) Mrs Penny clearly states the real difficulty in the way of such marriages Andhra Roy bitterly remarks The crux of the whole matter is this They don't like it because I am an Indian

In other novels the disapproval of mixed marriages is expressed in a different manner The novelists marry the English girl to the Indian only to open the eyes of their

¹ *A Mixed Marriage* (1903)
² *One of the Best* (1923)

² *The Rajah* (1911)

countrywoman to the enormity of her conduct. In *The Englishman* (1912) by Alice and Claud Askew, Prince Jotindra succeeds in marrying Miss Lucy Travers, in spite of the warning of Hugh Seymour. When Jotindra returns to India, it appears that the veneer of Etonian culture cannot conceal his inherent barbarism. Fortunately for the high-spirited girl, the barbarous Indian prince is killed while pig-sticking, and the heroine is able to marry her devoted English lover. The same is the theme of Mrs Savi's popular romance, *The Daughter-in-Law* (1915). The daughter-in-law is the *feringhi* wife of Hurri Mohun Babu. She is subjected to 'unspeakable humiliation' because she refused 'to remain in honoured seclusion as befitted the wife of a respectable Indian'. The English community cold-shouldered her, and her husband ill-treated her. Freedom was what her soul craved for: the liberty to cast aside the fetters that bound her to the East and to a husband of gross mind and habits. She longed to return to her home in England. Halifax, a widower who had recently buried his wife, comes to her rescue.

'Life in the East for fifteen years had increased instead of lessened, his prejudice against the natives, and had made him fastidious and intolerant. That an English girl should be mated with a man of Hurri Mohun's type was inconceivable degradation, the grossest outrage possible' (p. 65).

'Race prejudice was in his bones, and he refused to accept as authentic the examples among such marriages that had not ended disastrously' (p. 66).

The real cause of her unhappiness is mentioned by her in a letter to Evelyn:

'I can hardly explain fully, for I doubt if you would understand, only remember the rock on which you will meet with certain shipwreck in such a case is, RACE PREJUDICE, which is an unsurmountable barrier to your ever being one with Europeans in India, once you have left the shores of England, married to an Oriental' (p. 96).

The character sketch of Hurri Mohun's mother is

interesting She is a simple, kindly soul very different from the typical mother in law That Kathleen and Halifax are to be united is obvious enough that the mother of Hurri Mohun should approve of Kathleen's conduct is less obvious In another novel of Mrs Savl (*Mock Majesty*, 1923) Prince Rasul Ismet Khan who in dignity and courtesy beats all on board ship falls in love with Doreen Doreen accepts his costly presents acknowledges his merits is attracted by him but colours deeply at the bare thought of marrying an Indian Similarly Stella Hamilton in *The Star of Destiny* (1920) by H M F Campbell, falls in love with a westernized Hindu She comes to India and lives with an Anglo Indian family who help her to discover that her lover was already married and that the East was a fraud

The Beloved Rajah (1927) by A E R Craig and *The Snake in the Sleeve* (1927) by Eleanor Maddock are two other novels which likewise record the tragedy of mixed marriages In both cases the rajahs are handsome and cultured In both cases the English girls love them and in both cases racial pride is the cause of the tragedy *The Beloved Rajah* is artistically superior to *The Snake in the Sleeve* Mr Craig has genuine sympathy for the Maharajah of Nulwar and Chalys Nairn the unfortunate victims of racial prejudice He lets the story speak for itself without obtruding his views *The Snake* is a crude jumble of poison buried treasure snakes datura bracelet brothers' mysteries of the zenana and eastern wickedness

The moral of Mr S H Woolf's first novel *Ordeal on the Frontier* (1928) is that an English wife when she wants to flirt in India may do so with men of her own race and never with an Indian

If she must have some one to dance attendance on her why can't she choose a white man? (p 51)

Mubarak Shah the Nawabzadi of Birmali according to Mr Woolf, was a perfect specimen of a man He spoke

English practically without accent, was tailored in Savile Row and danced better than most Englishmen. But he was 'too civilized'. It is not the man so much as the principle to which Anglo-India objected.

'What's kept us top dogs in this country so long has been our prestige. Once we lose that we might as well pack up and clear out. And how can the native possibly respect us when he sees our women folk making themselves cheap and gadding about with stray Nawabzadas and such like gentry? The oriental simply doesn't understand the meaning of chivalry to women. Apart from breeding purposes he's only got one use for a woman, and I needn't tell you what that is' (p. 51)

So to keep up British prestige in India, Colonel Masroon, V C, the husband of the erring Estella, is honourably killed, Mubarak Shah of Birmali suitably punished, and Estella married to her lover, Captain Strange Carslake.

In his latest novel, *Mr Ram* (1929), Mr John Eyton takes up the hackneyed subject of mixed marriages and handles it in the approved hackneyed manner. Mr Jit Ram, the hero, is insincere, vulgar, indolent, without any conscience or scruple. We are glad to find that Miss Steptoe is saved from the consequences of her infatuation for him before it is too late. She learns from Mr Bewley that Indians have no conscience, that their minds work differently from those of the English, and that they learn to tell lies in the cradle. As long as Mr Eyton keeps his characters in England, he retains to some extent the detached attitude of a creator towards them. The picture of the lonely Jit Ram at Oxford excites pity. When Jit Ram returns to India, Mr Eyton's imagination seems to be affected by the poisonous atmosphere of our country. He loses touch with humanity and Jit Ram becomes a lifeless symbol of all that is bad in Indian character.

We have come across only three novels in which the marriage of an Indian with an English girl is not dissolved because of race or colour prejudice. In *An Old Score* (1923)

by Oliver Sandys Miss Jenie Cheyne of the Huguenot Theatre accompanies an Indian noble Shamshud throwing over her English lover But her short stay of less than a year in India tires her She finds herself a prisoner and longs for the footlights of London Her generous lover releases her and settles £500 a year on her for life

A more important and touching novel is *East and West*. *The Confessions of a Princess* published anonymously in 1924 is found the daughter o is

married to a Burmese Prince Lola finds Mindoon a fascinating lover—he has loved other girls besides herself. More than the incompatibility of a union between the East and the West the book depicts the follies and foibles of humanity. It also shows how Indian princes live in England. Lola is practically sold to Mindoon by her mother who admits that at one time she herself was the mistress of Mindoon. The book relates to times long since past, to the years preceding the annexation of Upper Burma. The *Confessions* are outspoken and it is specially noteworthy that the author probably a woman never once makes Princess Lola complain of the behaviour of her husband. After Mindoon's death she recollects him with sorrow. 'I had loved the dead man and owed him everything. How well I remembered Mindoon's pride of birth and race—though never put into so many words for fear no doubt of wounding me.

Like the *Confessions* another very human document is Jane Huk's novel *Abdullah and his Two Strings* (1927). The author's knowledge of and insight into the life of a Mohammedan family are remarkably intimate. Mrs Penny also has described the zenana life of respectable Hindu and Mohammedan women of the south. But her pictures are too vague and too conventional to suggest any real knowledge of the androon. But Jane Huk's knowledge of the zenana her description of Abdullah's

house with a long, 'low pavilion supported by slim white pillars', the details given by her of ladies' dress and toilet, and her account of the manner in which Abdullah passed his last night on the terrace of his house in the company of his 'first String' Muhamadī, his sister Sakeena and the loafing Nazir-ud-Din, indicate a much closer acquaintance with facts of real life. The following passage describes a family dinner

'In the pavilion preparation had been made for a meal. On the coarse white sheet where the ladies had slept during the heat of the afternoon, a long red figured cloth had been spread. On it lay, face downwards, four plates, and under a folded corner a pile of brown wafer-like cakes. There was no cutlery except some table spoons arranged like a star near the folded corner, no glass, no flowers, but the "table" was ready. A good substantial meal had been prepared. There was a dish made from chicken rice and butter called pelaw, another from meat and potatoes, another from meat alone and some sweetened rice mixed with almonds and raisins. The partakers of the meal ate with their fingers, first tearing up the wafer-like cakes into fragments, and with these fragments held between finger and thumb carrying the food to the mouth' (p. 223.)

The plot of the story is simple. As a medical student in Edinburgh, Abdullah falls in love with his landlady's daughter, a commonplace selfish girl, without any beauty, who admires Abdullah chiefly for his clothes. Abdullah does not inform her of his Moslem wife and marries her, thereby ruining his whole career. Disillusionment awaits Dorothy Abdullah in India. She, however, has neither the wish nor the power to return to Edinburgh. Abdullah does all he can to make her happy. He lives in Calcutta, forgetful of his family in Delhi. Jane Hukh has described the final parting of Abdullah from his family in touching words, and caught something of the tragedy of such marriages from the point of view of the Indian family

'Evening was closing round Abdullah, still he could see the two women before him, one crouching in a corner, the other

standing erect beside her. There was a barred window through which the light trickled and caught a woman's white silk dress, a slim dark hand, a braceleted arm. The other figure he could scarcely distinguish till it rose from the floor and stood up. There was no sound till Abdullah moved uneasily. He was leaving Muhamadi for ever. He knew that she would pine for him in solitude. He knew that her heart was bursting with grief which a kind word, a promise to return might assuage, but no word or promise could he utter. They stuck in his throat. If they only could gush out they would cost him nothing, give him relief, but they would not come. She was the mother of his child. Once a touch from her hand, a look from her eyes, had filled him with delight. Even pity would not help him to speak.

If you send a wire I'll come. Sakeena, he said at last, his hand on the door.

Nazir ud Din will look after us. Sakeena answered with out moving, and of course there is Mahmet.

There was bitterness in the voice and at the moment it was calm he needed. He must get away, and opening the door he slipped out. Once again beside her mother he had to face another ordeal. She rose and embraced him, then came Hassena, then the old blind woman, and throwing a couple of rupees at the maids who stood watching him, he hurried from his home never looking back. (pp 311-12)

Abdullah and his Two Strings is the only novel that has something to say about the tragedy of mixed marriages from the point of view of the neglected Indian wife. We
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50 *Novels of Eurasian life*

Many Anglo Indian novelists describe the life and character of Eurasians. Almost all of them emphasize their lack of moral backbone or draw a contrast between the English and the Indian side of their character. They invariably attribute all that is good in a Eurasian to the drop of English blood in him, and all that is objectionable

to his Indian parentage Kipling was the first to make and emphasize this contrast In his story, *His Only Chance in Life*, Michele D'Cruze, the lover of the black Miss Vezzis, does good work out of all proportion to his pay because of the 'white drop' in his veins This idea of Kipling has been worked up in a number of novels

Mrs Milne Rae's novel, *A Bottle in the Smoke* (1912), is interesting from this point of view Mark Cheveril of the Indian Civil Service, who believes himself to be a half-caste and is not ashamed of owning it, is contrasted with Alfred Rayner, a barrister of Madras Rayner fancies that he is a pukka sahib, and he hates Eurasians Cheveril is good, heroic, and religious Rayner, on the other hand, is bad, cowardly, and selfish He commits forgeries, allies himself with unscrupulous Indians, maltreats his angel of an English wife, tells lies and finally, disguised as an ayah, flies from the law The good Mr Cheveril proves to be pure English born, while Rayner really is a Eurasian When he comes to know of his parentage, Rayner feels ashamed of his own father and treats him with scant courtesy The heroine, who lived like a 'bottle in the smoke' with Rayner, is restored to her English lover Rayner is an unmitigated scoundrel Apparently the 'white drop' in his blood did not influence his character, the only evidence of it was his handsome features In David Morpeth, however, Mrs Rae paints a good Eurasian Being only too conscious of the disabilities of Eurasians, 'unduly dominated by the aristocracy of colour in the white man' and desiring to spare his son the cup that was so bitter to his taste, the good Eurasian allows his son to be brought up as an Englishman The result is much unhappiness for all concerned.

The duality of Eurasian character is the subject of Mr. P C Wren's novel, *Driftwood Spars* (1912) John Robin Ross-Ellison, or Ilderim Dost Mohammad, is the son of an English wife by a Pathan father The author suggests, in the manner of *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, that it was

Ilderim Dost Mohammad who killed Mrs Dearman and not John Robin Ross Ellison The Englishman merely loves the wife of another man the Pathan kills her

In *The Snake in the Sleeve*, Nagundra with white heredity once removed took to European ways like a duck to water, but a few weeks after he came back to his native country and environments, he is so changed and degenerated that you would hardly recognise him

Miss Irene Burn's novel *The Border Line* (1916), describes the social boycott by the English community in India of an English girl who marries a Eurasian and her other troubles As a novel it is of doubtful value But it is interesting as depicting Eurasian characteristics The chipped staccato manner of half-caste speech, the malignant scorn felt by Eurasians for the pure born Indians, their desire to be considered pure sahibs and their snobbery their lack of thought in matters of taste and of business their habit of clannish hospitality the amount of paint and powder used by their girls and their vulgarity in general are well emphasized and illustrated The novelist particularly desires to show that Eurasians run away from difficulties and have little sense of responsibility

the beautiful Eurasian with almond shaped eyes, bitterly remarks

Can't a Eurasian be treated like any one else? They love and hate and suffer and are glad like every one else (p 81)

It is the old cry of Shylock wrung out of a despised girl Mrs Savi supplies a reason for this differential treatment

I have no use whatever for Eurasians In the first place we are told they combine the worst traits and characteristics of both races—they are untrustworthy—and there is always the danger of coloured offspring (p 43)

In *Torchlight*, she draws a picture of a Eurasian whose 'un-English ways contrasted widely with those of English-women in India'

'For she used to scold her servants in a high pitched voice reminiscent of native bazaars, call to them when wanted in piercing tones, lie about in dressing gown and slippers reading yellow-back novels and eating sugary, native sweets that increased weight to abnormal proportions. She never did for herself (and said) that it was derogatory to her prestige as an "Englishwoman" to help herself when she had a host of servants to minister to her' (p. 50)

In *Fifty*, Mr Shelland Bradley emphasizes this duality of Eurasian character. Mrs Mendes struck him as 'an entirely new type and impossible'. Clement is described as one of those exceptional youths that the Eurasian community sometimes produces. Extraordinarily good-looking, he seemed to combine the strength and build of the Englishman with all the grace and suppleness of the Indian. But he had no character. Though a sportsman, he lacked the spirit of sportsmanship. He illustrated in his person a strange mingling of racial characteristics.

'One moment he was the very best type of an English boy, manly, spirited and plucky, and the next he had shrunk to something altogether unmanly, spiritless and feeble' (p. 193)

Miss Lætitia's letter to Dick releasing him from his engagement is a thorough condemnation of the East, so thorough as to be unconvincing.

'It is so difficult for me', wrote Lætitia to Dick, 'to make you with your pure English blood and your splendid English upbringing, to understand. There is this unhappy mingling of two races in me and mine. In some of us the one race predominates and in some the other. In me the English side predominates, largely because of my upbringing in an English family and in English ways. But the other side is there too. I know it. I feel it. It is something from which, once born as I am, you can never get away. And it may be, as often happens, that later on that other side will come more and more to the

front the call of the East conquering the call of the West So far I cannot imagine it happening for everything within me cries out for everything that is English shunning that which is Indian (p 257)

Sir John Carstin says

There s some terrible fatality about the admixture of English and Indian blood It seems more often than not to produce the evil points of both without a sufficiency of the good points of both to counteract them In the half caste the backbone in some unaccountable way seems so often to have been left out They ve got no grit no stamina to resist either physically mentally or morally They just go down before the first misfortune or the first attack of illness It is amazing I have seen a good deal of the Eurasian and it is always the same When a crisis or an emergency occurs they just give in (p 292)

That Lætitia Saunders is married to the English hero, in spite of her Eurasian origin, is explained by the fact that she approached an English woman as nearly as it is possible for a Eurasian to do

Similarly in *Blue Moons* (1925) so called because a Eurasian could be distinguished from an Englishman by carefully noting blue moons at the base of his fingers, Mr G B Newcomen marries Esmé to the English hero and contrasts her with Lady Blanch, the octoroon girl in whom the wicked East predominates

51 *Eurasian beauty*

All authors pay a tribute to the beauty of Eurasian men and women They represent Eurasian girls as always manœuvring to capture some Englishman for a husband Mrs Colquhoun Grant s portrait of Miss Armour O Callaghan may be taken as typical She possesses a beauty that might well appeal to man s senses against his better judgment She is passionate unscrupulous and without any moral sense Whether she does good or evil it is the result of selfish impulses She possesses a charm which,

while it repelled, also acted insidiously on the feelings of those she sought to influence. Her attempts to capture an English magistrate in a small *mofussil* station are realistically described.

Pauline Bartle in *Diffidence* by Mr John Eyton and Daphne in *The Wishing Stone* by Mrs Penny closely resemble Miss O'Callaghan. Like the unsuspecting, good-natured Trevenna, who is saved from the trap laid for him by Miss O'Callaghan, Jimmy Vane, the worry-hunted husband of Joan (who had run away with a lover), is saved from the wiles of Pauline Dattle, 'the healthy, wholesome, brown wood-sprite' of Hazart Bagh. Before it is too late he observes 'the Indian in her face', an expression that the coolies wear.

'It was not vitality, though it might masquerade as such. It was just a sensuous abandonment to the joy of being alive' (p. 247)

The inherent shiftlessness of Pauline's room frightened him, and in it he saw an index of her mind and character. Trevenna was afraid of marriage to a Eurasian, Jimmy cannot risk even a liaison with Pauline. Mr. Eyton's treatment of this episode is unsatisfactory. But the parting scene between Pauline and Jimmy has been written with feeling.

"Pauline, I'm going", Jimmy said, picking up the hat.

'She did not move, only raised her eyes, and looked at him steadily

"I knew you would. You wanted an excuse."

'That stung him—there was truth in it

"You didn't play the game", he muttered

"Did you?" came the quick response

"No," he admitted, very low

"I am only a blackey-white. You wouldn't expect me to play the game" (p. 281)

Mrs Penny's Daphne Fernandez is a little mystical. She was exceptionally fair of complexion, but her mind was oriental.

This fact was revealed in many little ways in her belief in the supernatural in a love of the ease and luxury of Eastern life and in the attraction that dark races find in the fairer nations of the North. She turned to an Englishman like a flower to the sun and found him irresistible (p 150)

She tries to entrap Dangerfield by displaying her smooth neck and arms of the tint of ivory and her ankles and the innocent globe trotting Englishman who has quarrelled with his wife is lapped in a sensuous atmosphere¹ as he sips some of the best coffee he has ever tasted while sitting by her. Mrs Penny has a due regard for proprieties. After having shown her hero something of the sensuous, supernatural and mysterious India she unites him to his erring wife.

Mrs Ethel Duff Fyfe in her sensational novel *The Relentless Gods* (1910) adds another portrait to this gallery of beautiful sensuous Eurasians. Philip Willmott and his sister Camilla compelled by reasons of economy to live in a dreary Eurasian boarding house at Calcutta, in comparison with which the poorest room in a labourer's cottage at home would have been snug and comfortable.² make the acquaintance of Thea Lindsay. Thea has strange ideas she calmly expounds her philosophy of marriage to the innocent Camilla.

Marry a man who loves you but do not love him at all. It will not worry you then if he changes or dies or anee thing. Yes much better marry a man you don't like verree much (p 97)

Thea is beautiful but listening to the fulsome vulgar and utterly immodest compliments of her ayah with evident enjoyment she loses the freshness and purity of youth.³ She allows herself to be shampooed continuously as a result of which dangerous habit the conscience is lulled the will is weakened and insidious devils of desire enter the heart. She does all she can to capture Philip Willmott.

¹ p 153

p 51

² p 267

and finding that he loves Lotus, the strange child of Hindu-Moslem-Christian parentage, she is filled with vindictive fury.

'Chita' in Kathlyn Rhodes's *Golden Journey* (1926), Lady Blanch in *Blue Moons*, Mary Deane in *Neither Fish nor Flesh*, Lætitia Saunders in *Fifty*, and Laura Lowell of Mr Henry Bruce are other beautiful Eurasians. With the exception of Lætitia Saunders, all show the degrading influence of their mixed parentage.

52. *Henry Bruce*

Mr Henry Bruce is among the more important novelists of Eurasia. In *The Eurasian* (1913), one of his six novels of Eurasian life, he has tried to give what he considers 'a just view of a sport of Nature'. It is an attempt at analysis of a Eurasian, Robert Slow, in whom the Indian element predominates, and is a sympathetic picture of the bitterness that he feels at the treatment meted out to him by Englishmen. Cherry's marriage with him enables the author to enlarge upon the characteristics of a Eurasian.

'"Why thunderstrike him like that because he's a Eurasian?"' asks Cherry

'"Because the Eurasian as such is a man of streaks, all striped like a barber's pole. He's not a whole man. Many mixtures are good but not this one. The only certainty about a Eurasian is his uncertainty"' (p. 206)

An English soldier, Slow's unsuccessful rival in love, thus delivers himself on the subject of Eurasians:

'"Do you know what an Yewrasian is, Cherry?"' asks William Dekker. "He's the half part of a nigger, but not the twentieth part of a man. Never you trust an Yewraysian, Cherry, if you meet one. He'll twist in your fingers like a false tool, and, lucky you, if you're not wounded! A nigger is a devil, most times. But an Yewraysian is not a proper human being"' (p. 78)

Later the poor Eurasian has his ribs broken by Corporal Dekker, who could not stand an English maiden being

kissed by a damned yaller Yewrasian like a boneless worm worse nor any nigger

In three of his novels *The Residency* *The Song of Surrender* and *The Wonder Mist*, Mr Bruce develops the character of a Eurasian girl Rangu or Laura Lowell who was accepted by Sir Robert Lowell as his daughter and sent to England to be brought up by his sister as a European. Mr Bruce shows how a Eurasian is bound to come a cropper to make some tremendous *faux pas* in spite of his or her European upbringing. Laura has returned to India as a straight clean limbed vigorous young woman of twenty seven. Everything about India seems to attract her. The brown colour of the natives so repulsive to pure Englishmen has a peculiar fascination for her. A soft tenderness an enervating languor fills her being. She feels an intense desire to love. She longs for romance. Passion breathes in the scented breezes. She feels like a pear ready to drop from its branch. She is demonstratively affectionate to her uncle. She envies her ayah who was loved by her butler Gaspar. When she learns of her mixed origin she is not sorry for herself but feels for her uncle, and bravely offers to leave the Residency unless he wishes her to stay on. A few days later she meets Raja Amar Rao who had fascinated her at a ball in England. She unresistingly gives herself up to him.

Take me on your own terms lord! I am even willing to be Berenice to your Titus. Loose me or hold me fast—I am wholly yours! (*The Residency* p 239)

They keep their love secret. But Colonel Moor sees more than they suspect and determines that Amar Rao shall keep the law and play the game whether in politics or in love.

The love of Raja Amar Rao for Laura forms the main topic of Mr Bruce's third novel *The Song of Surrender* (1915). Laura's surrender is complete. India and her Hindu lover had bewitched her and being what she was

she 'implicitly responded to her heredity or her fate'. Amar Rao is charming enough to set any girl a-dreaming. 'He had personal beauty, valour, and accomplishments, with a romantic position and personality which stirred all that was poetical in her not very intellectual nature'¹ Laura's own instinct, the real impulse of her being, drew her to the voluptuous East. She was a woman who dared to be herself, and if she threw away her life, she never regretted it.²

Love's vessel, I would gladly be
Emptied of personality

Her conduct gives rise to gossip and scandal in the Anglo-Indian society of Kanhala and enables the author to display his gift of satire. Laura, quite indifferent to her social excommunication, is radiant, exultant and expanding, in which she reminds us of Madame Bovary after her first fall. She seems to take an extraordinary delight in her health and in her womanhood. 'She felt that she had come into her heritage'. She loves to hear about her Indian mother and continues to tend her stricken uncle with loving care. It is only when all the schemes of Sir Amar Rao miscarry and she intercepts a Government of India telegram authorizing the arrest of her lord and lover that she decides to run away with him to his romantic castle at Quibra, the castle of love.

Mr Henry Bruce's fourth novel of the series, *The Wonder Mist*, is somewhat disappointing. It describes the life of Laura as the Hindu wife of Sir Amar Rao who, dishonoured and outlawed, passes his days in his Quibra Castle over the Arabian sea, while Laura's English lover, Piggy Appleton, with the help of Lord Tudor, the owner of the *Wonder Mist*, embarks on an expedition to rescue Laura. The book describes the voyage of the *Wonder Mist*, Mr Murphy's liaison with Mrs Rosina Elderberry, his quarrel with Mr Wall, the captain, the appearance of

¹ *Song of Surrender*, p. 61.

² *Ibid*, p. 63.

Reggie Moore on board the *Wonder Mist* as a stowaway the sudden arrival of Peggy Lake, the waiting maid of Laura at Gibraltar and their life on board ship The chapter entitled *A Hindu Wife* shows a sympathetic understanding of a Hindu household Mr Bruce's conception of the duties of a Hindu wife is not based upon real facts his source of information is *Padmapurana* More over he seems to forget that Laura has been living as an Englishwoman for over twenty years and is the wife not of a poor Hindu but of Raja Sir Amar Rao It is difficult to believe that Laura the Rani of Sir Amar Rao the Lord of Emeralds and of Elephants even in exile should have to grind the corn which her husband ate Similarly the spectacle of Rani Laurabai cooking for her husband is unconvincing The whole chapter seems to have been introduced to show the complete identification of Laura with the life of Sir Amar Rao and to contrast her with Miriam the English wife of Sir Amar Rao who never became orientalized

The mission of the *Wonder Mist* is successful Piggy Appleton succeeds in carrying off Laura and Sir Amar Rao is killed Laura is reconverted to Christianity and married to Appleton Laura's sudden marriage to a Christian who had killed her lord is difficult to understand considering her professed devotion to Hindu ideals But perhaps it was the object of the author to illustrate Laura's utter lack of moral backbone—she was after all the daughter of Muktabai of the Tulsipur Bazaar With all her faults however, Laura Lowell stands out as one of the most fascinating creations in Anglo Indian fiction

The Residency and *The Song of Surrender* besides delineating the career of Laura are a faithful record of the Indian and especially Anglo Indian society in a small Indian state and incidentally of state politics Sir Amar Rao's is a striking personality He is a curious mixture of gallantry and licentiousness, of nobility and meanness of bravery and cowardice His ambition is great and he hopes to be

the master not only of Kanhala but, with the help of Germany, of India. He fails because of the 'Imperial indiscretion' of Emperor Wilhelm II, and of the usual good luck of the English. Maharaja Balwant Rao of Kanhala is a dummy—an opium-eating, hard-drinking, superstitious nonentity. Moropant Ghatgay is a typical Diwan or Chief Minister of an Indian State, resourceful but unscrupulous. Among the Anglo-Indian characters may be mentioned the 'Wobbling Bishop' of Bombay whom the author heartily dislikes. His treatment of Mr Rennie is positively mean. Mrs Sampson and her daughter Betty know the 'dark taint' in their blood, but insist on being treated as of pure English blood. Mrs Sampson's one ambition in life is to be presented to the Sovereign. She takes delight in entertaining the Bishop of Bombay because he is a 'lord', and refuses the card of a Labour M.P. Of the minor characters the loveliest is Raghoba, the humble Christian Preacher.

The four novels discussed above deal with two Eurasian waifs at Tulsipur. The other two novels of Mr Henry Bruce have a different theme. *The Temple Girl* (1919) derives its title from the last chapter of the book where Dr Fulton, having accepted an appointment in the Ritualist Mission, suddenly meets the beautiful Betty Stuart, the daughter of Venubai and General Stuart of Kanhala. Dr Fulton, taking advantage of his stay at Halwach, pays a visit to Lingam, the city of the 'bulging domes and indecent bas-reliefs', where hundreds of *Murals* or brides of Shiva walked with a free, springy step and a merry, fearless gaze, attracting hundreds of globe-trotters from all over the world. He had been attracted by the photo of Betty Stuart. The face had haunted him ever since,

'it had beckoned and challenged him onward. It had given some sort of illumination to a dreary half year in India. He had idealised it absurdly, yet not, he now thought, unduly' (p. 501)

Needless to say he falls in love with her and intends to save her from her impending fate—the fate of a temple girl

The Bride of Shiva (1920) continues the story of the love of Dr Fulton for Betty Stuart. The story moves forward haltingly interrupted by many episodes and sketches which are not quite germane to the main plot. The book opens with the incident of Mrs Smiler's theft of little Yamuna (the daughter of Prembai a retired *Murali*) in the name of the Lord and in the interests of morality. Her action is legally wrong and gives rise to bitter feelings. Mr Corsand who tries the case has to convict Mrs Smiler who suffers imprisonment like a martyr. This incident serves no purpose in the evolution of the story but it throws much light on the evil institution of *Muralis* connected with the worship of Shiva and the honest though often misguided attempts of Christian missionaries to rescue the unfortunate girls from their fate. It vividly portrays the clash of Hinduism with Christianity of law with morality. Mrs Smiler and Yamuna soon disappear from the story, but they intensify the central plot—the struggle of Betty Stuart to save herself from the fate reserved for her by her mother Venubai and her *guru*, the terrible Hari Pant the high priest of Lingam. Betty Stuart does not want to become a *Murali* and in her distress sends a message through her grandmother Marthabai to Dr Fulton to rescue her. The entreaty persuasions and threats of her mother are of no avail. She is thrashed but does not yield. She is willing to sacrifice her fortune but not herself. Fulton arrives in Lingam, but through the indiscretion of his drunken servant the news leaks out that Betty Stuart or the proud Nilabai is going to meet her foreign lover. There is a racial riot. Betty is seized by the mob. Dr Fulton is seriously wounded and the English hotel where he was putting up is burnt to ashes. The news of the abduction and arson causes a stir in Kanhala Residency. Mr Corsand goes to Lingam only

to fall a victim to a horrible form of death, contrived by the devilish ingenuity of Hari Pant. We are left in the dark about the fate of Miss Betty Stuart, Dr. Fulton, and Hari Pant

Mr. Henry Bruce's novels are written with care and understanding. His style is simple and clear. The plots are thin, but the stories are full of well-drawn, vividly portrayed character sketches of Anglo-Indians, Eurasians and Indians. Mr. Bruce knows India well. He has lived here and obviously liked it. He is undoubtedly great in the knowledge of Eurasia. Though a 'pakka saha-ab', he is sympathetic in the treatment of that curious world that has evolved out of the contact of the East with the West. He does not favour mixed marriages.

'Mixed marriages very often mean happiness for the first generation, who are the rightful Eurasians. The retribution, the curse, the torment, comes for the following generations, in whom two opposing bloods are uncannily mixed' (*The Temple Girl*, p. 186)

The burden of his stories is the degeneration that is the result of such unions. And he is right in his conclusions, if we remember the type of the Indian women whom the English make love to. They are Muktabais and Venubais, women of the bazaar, or Dayabais whom the Ritualist Missionaries, like Mr. Whittaker, seduce without having the courage to marry. Such women and their offspring are often left to their fate. It is not surprising that, possessing no advantage of birth, breeding, or education, they should be found lacking in moral stamina. With the exception of their lissom bodies and dark flashing eyes, they have little else to their credit.

53 *The Ranee of Sarawak.*

Lost Property (1930) by the Ranee of Sarawak depicts the sad plight of Eurasian children. Few authors, as the cover rightly informs the readers, could have written this tragedy with the perfection of touch displayed by the

Ranee Two Eurasian children Henry and Helen Golightly, arrive in England to live with their aunt One Dr Dunn calls them 'the question mark of the East' because these children have never yet been answered

Why are we brought into the world to be denied? How cruelly the world treats them in their childhood and how difficult is the problem of their adolescence may be learnt from the Ranee's pathetic story Henry is very sensitive to the insults and bitterly inquires if they do not want us why do our parents bring us into the world?

England belongs to you cries Henry and you to it We have no country neither have we any race (p 112)

Miss Golightly with her faded eyes wet with tears tries to comfort him But young Henry is inconsolable

It has been gross neglect on the part of God to find no place on earth for us (p 113)

And Miss Golightly had no answer to this though her heart bled for him Their attempt to pass as dagos fails They have their defects of character and breeding but their misery is the result chiefly of colour prejudice Miss Golightly pleads in vain to be allowed a space that they can breathe in As a result of their treatment Henry resolves deliberately to embrace evil

I shall drink and more than likely steal I shall misconduct myself and sell myself limbs and soul to the devil What reward is there on earth I ask you for being virtuous? (p 208)

No Englishman scruples to cheat them for they are only half castes the flotsam and jetsam of the East and West After a bitter experience that dries up their soul they are taken to the East where they go down rapidly into the depths of degradation nourishing a deadly hatred against the English Dennison who tries to be honest by Helen, fails Oh where is the justice? he asks Helen is as good as any other girl

But the world said no Western world said no his

own father said no . The streak in Helen was inaccessible and East is East and West is West was the inevitable law ' (p 285)

Lost Property is a full and frank expression of the tragedy of Eurasian existence The Rance of Sarawak knows her subject and has ability and literary skill to place the problem before her countrymen in all its pathos. 'Would a day ever come when they would be free?' she asks ¹

¹ With the exception of the Rance of Sarawak, the only Anglo-Indian novelist who feels for Eurasians is Mr Edward Thompson 'It's perfectly vile, the way we have treated the Eurasians We brought them into existence, and then we tread them underfoot and despise them' (*An Indian Day*, p 28)

CHAPTER VIII

INDIAN POLITICS AND ANGLO INDIAN NOVELS

54 *Beginnings of Indian nationalism*

IN the eighteenth century the French were the chief rivals of the English in India in the nineteenth century it was Russia who disturbed their political equanimity¹ When Kipling wrote the Great Game played throughout the borders of India was directed by a constant fear of Russian intrigues in Afghanistan and on the North Western Frontier of India Internal politics gave little trouble to our rulers after the Mutiny, and by the end of the last century India by common consent had become the brightest jewel in the British Crown The Indian National Congress had indeed been founded but its activities attracted little attention Kipling laughed at the Bengalis and their English and ridiculed the idea of Indians being put in charge of the administration of a district In his dreams of the Empire Kipling always saw India as a mere dependency His stories do not introduce a single agitator chap or contain a single allusion to the Congress Bankim Chandra Chatterjee who wrote in the nineteenth century mentions secret societies of young men dedicated to the service of the Motherland In his historical romances the activities of these societies are directed against the Moslem rulers of Bengal and it is interesting to note that Bankim saw in the establishment of British rule in India the working of the mysterious hand of God for the emancipation of India from the Moslem yoke

¹ Several novelists of the twentieth century also anticipate a second rising engineered by foreign powers—chiefly Bolshevik Russia In *The Way of Stars* Mrs Adams Beck makes use of the belief of Indians in reincarnation to introduce a Russian beauty into the zenana of an Indian prince for propagating Bolshevik doctrines in India Mr Alexander Wilson also uses Bolshevik intrigues in India as the *motif* of his novels

Three periods of Indian nationalism Down to the end of the last century Indian politics possessed no interest for the writer of fiction. It is with the partition of Bengal in 1905, and the all-India agitation that resulted therefrom, that Anglo-India first began to be conscious of a disturbing element in the country.

The evolution of Indian nationalism in the twentieth century may be divided into three periods (i) the pre-War period ending with Morley-Minto Reforms, (ii) the Non-Co-operation Movement of 1919-20 and the demand for Dominion status, and (iii) the period of what Mr Edward Thompson has styled 'aggressive nationalism', in which India's right to independence was formally put forward by the Indian National Congress.

In the first period the attitude of Englishmen in India, as depicted in the novels of the time, was one of arrogance, perhaps mingled with a little fear. The arrogance was born of the conviction that 'no nation in the world other than British could rule so many peoples with so much tact, consideration, and success',¹ but it was tempered by the fear of a second Mutiny. The agitation that began in Bengal spread all over India. The boycott of foreign cloth was preached all over the country. The average Anglo-Indian official saw no difference between the Swadeshi movement and sedition, and advocated the suppression of the movement by repressive methods. The best picture of this period is given by Edmund Candler.

One of the earlier novels showing the influence of a budding Indian nationalism is *The Unlucky Mark* by Mrs. F. E. Penny Quinbury, a sub-magistrate in the story, condemns unreservedly the Swadeshi movement of the time. He advocates putting into motion the old Act of 1818 because

'One and all, from the Bengalis to our B A's down South, hate the thought of it. It robs them of martyrdom, removes

¹ E. W. Savil, *Mistress of Herself*, p. 225

them from the neighbourhood of their admirers and does away with all chance of the notoriety so dear to the heart of the Hindu during the trial (p 74)

In another novel *The Inevitable Law* (1907) Mrs Penny refers to the Congress as a mere bladder inflated by cheap gas, without even the power of causing an explosion Mrs E W Savi though she wrote later on, refers to the change in the political atmosphere after the partition of Bengal In *A Prince of Lovers*, she notices the changed attitude of village folk who only a few years ago were full of kindly smiles and readiness to help the sahibs¹ but who were becoming hostile to Europeans and were taking every opportunity to humiliate the white race' In *The Reproof of Chance* she tells us how the mischief going on since the Partition of Bengal affected Anglo India

The Boltons and Sharps will not bring out their daughters this year on this account and two or three people I know are sending their wives home since they are transferred to Calcutta Mrs Playfair is in a state of nerves and would be away immediately only she can't trust her gay boy to behave in her absence see the way even little street urchins yell that disgusting and unnecessary patriotic cry Bande Mataram and jeer at European ladies when they are alone and unprotected (pp 193-4)

She fears that the indifference of men at the helm of affairs to the growth of extremism will lead to the sacrifice of innocent lives or that of some great personage

The Burnt Offering by Mrs Everard Cotes *The Bronze Bell* by L J Vance *Cecilia Kirkham's Son* by Mrs Kenneth Combe all published in 1909 for the first time mention the Indian unrest *The Bronze Bell* is an absorbing narrative full of dramatic situations and has for the framework of the story the likeness between Amber and Rutton Rutton appears to Amber a public school and Oxford man a strange solitary figure with a vast knowledge of the

East But later Rutton proves to be a Rajput of the bluest blood, and no less a person than the Maharana of Khanda-war *The Burnt Offering* is not so much a story as a presentation in dramatic form of the political situation in India Vulcan Mills, a Labour Member, visits India, accompanied by his beautiful daughter, who is burning with sympathy for the subject race She is loved by an English official and an Indian revolutionary These two are used by Mrs Cotes as representatives of opposing views on the problem of 'Indian unrest' She writes with restraint Her dialogues are clever and her scenes of social life charming

Mrs Kenneth Combe's novel is in marked contrast to that of Mrs Cotes in tone and spirit Charles Kirkham, son of Cecilia Kirkham, who runs away with the English wife of the Rajah of Tahlaghur, is an over-drawn and somewhat sentimental picture of filial perfection It is he who unearths the plot of the disloyal Rajah and his half-English son, showing that he was cleverer than His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor and the local General

Two novels dominated by the idea of revolution in India are *Shipped Moorings* by Mr A F Wallis and *Second Rising* by Mr L Beresford *Shipped Moorings* is absurd both in conception and execution Edgar Skelton, later Lord Brenzett and Secretary of State for India, drops the prosecution of a number of English and European mischief-makers who were in the pay of a clever Bengali, Ulaska-Baroda, and were planning a revolution in India He does so because he loves a beautiful but worthless woman, Ismene, and is naturally accused of betraying the Empire Excepting the sketch of Clara Leland and a little humour, the novel has nothing of value The Secretary of State learns that Indians are being regularly trained in the use of arms by many Europeans who have found their way into Bengal How sedition is preached in India is shown by the following passage which is picturesque, though meaningless.

Here [in Benares] amongst the ancient ghats dark emissaries were everywhere busy stealing unobserved between the burning pyres brushed by the very dead or else crouching on the platforms of the priests under their umbrellas of coarse matting. None could escape their message of revolt. They mingled with the crowds idly gathered round some snake charmer with his hissing cobras they loitered on the vast shadeless stairways up and down which the meek-eyed pilgrims incessantly streamed and upon the first suspicion of danger vanished within the arcades beneath the interminable terraces that stretch beside the Ganges and glitter in the moon (p 213)

Mr Beresford's novel *The Second Rising* is more interesting as giving an insight into the psychology of Anglo Indians of the time. Mr Beresford is evidently obsessed with the fear that the excitement following the partition of Bengal and the abject surrender of the Indian Government to popular agitation must lead to a second rising like the Mutiny of 1857. In his prefatory note to the novel Mr Beresford maintains that the existing anarchical and socialistic tendencies of so-called educated Hindus if allowed to grow unchecked will cause a violent outburst. The only remedy that the average fiction writer can think of is ruthless repression. He foresees in the Indian's cry for self government a repetition of the horrors of the Mutiny and is never tired of pouring the vials of his wrath on Englishmen in general and English M P s in particular who are suspected of pro Indian sympathies. For Indian leaders or agitators, he has nothing but utter contempt. He feels and knows that they have no character, no originality and no power of organization. *The Second Rising* is characteristic of this Anglo Indian psychology. Mr Beresford honestly thought that

The Government has never yet had to face anything approaching the enormity of a revolution engineered under anarchical conditions by a properly organized and financed head-quarters in Europe (p 98)

As a novel, *The Second Rising* has nothing distinctive. Mr Barton of Delhi is a representative civil servant, conscientious and hard-working, who feels that he is carrying the burden of the Indian Empire on his shoulders. Unlike his unimaginative chief, he scents that trouble is brewing, and without official encouragement, but with official connivance, he sets out to nip it in the bud. In this difficult task he is assisted by a clever, faithful Pathan, Mushir Khan, a Secret Service agent. Thanks chiefly to Mushir Khan, the rebellion is suppressed, and the rebels effectively dealt with. Mr Beresford does not admire anything in India, with the exception of spies, dancing girls, obsequious Bengali Babus and our beautiful nights.

Mr Hobart-Hampden's novel, *The Price of Empire* (1911), deals with an abortive plot to murder all European residents of the small town of Pachor. The fear of a second mutiny finds expression thus

“‘Lilian,’” says one of the characters, “‘think of ’57. It will be the same thing over again’” (p. 86)

The plot is disclosed by Miss Seeta Dass, the educated and westernized sister of the local civilian, Hemchandra Dass, to Allan Tremaine, whom she loves and whom she forces to marry her as the price of her treachery. Everything would have been all right, had Allan loved this passionate Indian, but he loves another—Lilian Sylvester. The author has not the slightest sympathy for Indian aspirations or Indian character. All Indians in this novel are miserable creatures.¹ Seeta's unfortunate passion is the only redeeming feature of this commonplace novel.

¹ With the exception of Mr Edward Thompson no Anglo-Indian novelist has succeeded in drawing a convincing picture of a genuine Indian patriot. Mrs Wingfield-Stratford mentions ‘a young seditionist—a person very different from the traditional fire-breathing desperado—a dreamy, highly strung youth, unpractical, gentle and an ardent admirer of Macaulay and John Stuart Mill’. But she does not tell us anything more about him. Dharma Govinda and Chandra Swami in *The Unlucky Mark* are caricatures of the journalist and agitator of the first decade of the twentieth century. Govinda, as an orator, does not care for sense but only for the ‘flow of words which he had produced’. Chandra Swami is a ‘vermin’.

55 *Edmund Candler and Indian unrest*

In 1912 appeared another book *Sri Ram, the Revolutionist* by Edmund Candler which may be regarded as the best of the novels dealing with this stage of India's political agitation. Mr Candler describes the book as a transcript from life 1907-10. The book gave rise to a storm of protest all over the Panjab because it was thought to be an attack on the Arya Samaj, a religious organization of the Province. Mr Candler stated in a postscript that it was not his object to condemn the Samaj as a political body. But internal evidence shows that the Samaj had good grounds to complain. Here is one passage:

It was the most complicated organization and the police believed that the whole body of the Arya Samaj was involved in the nexus, so that every postal and telegraph clerk and every subordinate on the railway knew exactly what he had to do on the day of reckoning (pp 102-3)

Sri Ram is described as a typical product of his age. His associates are members of the Arya Samaj whose religious ideals might have helped him had they not been perverted into gall by his teachers for temporal ends. As an instance of this perversion Mr Candler writes

Against the sacred names of Rama and Arjun and Bhima

were inscribed the names of such modern martyrs as Tilak and Kanhya Lal and Khudiram Bose who murdered the English ladies at Mozaffarpur. History was going to repeat itself. The English were *Asuras* again, who ravaged the motherland, which was in the birth-pangs of a new breed of dragon-slayers who were to rid her of the evil. So the religious man was the man who most execrated the English, who most forswore English rule, and English piece-goods and English everything, except ideas and idioms and the itinerant Labour Member and his catchwords' (p. 389)

Thus guided, or misguided, Sri Ram and his companion Banarsi Dass became revolutionaries. Sri Ram was sincere, with a rankling bitterness in his heart. But Banarsi Dass was 'a vain, meddling, town-bred youth', 'a half leader, half clown' in the college. He spoke 'glibly with an inconsequent muddle-headed stream of verbiage'. The two boys reading in the college at Gandeshwar and coming under the influence of 'a dangerous agitator', Narasimha Swami, 'who was identified with the spiritual side of the movement, in the same way as Tilak was with the political', turn definitely seditious and are expelled by the Principal, Mr Skene. Sri Ram, silent, but brooding over his wrongs, goes to his father, Mool Chand, who had sent his son to Gandeshwar as 'one invests a bit of money in a life insurance'. Mr Candler is good at portrait-painting. The sketch of Mool Chand deserves praise.

'Mool Chand, you would say, is a dear old man, slow-moving, slow-speaking, patient, strong, enduring, unbent in adversity. He is like an old prophet, clear-eyed, grizzled in the sun, the brow and beard of Abraham, the gestures of an apostle. He salaams with a submissive dignity, raising both hands. The Commissioner loves him as his own horse. But he would leave his aunt, or his little girl, at a pinch, to die in her plague-bed alone' (pp. 83-4)

The description of his mud house in the village of Mograon is one of the best specimens of English prose in Anglo-Indian novels. When plague visits Mograon, Mr

Candler paints the horrors of the stricken village with the brush of a realist. His power of careful character drawing is seen at its best in the portraits of Englishmen. Moon the policeman who condemned as cant all talk about the fitness of Indians for self government and who held that India was theirs as long as they had the strength to govern it is typical of Englishmen whom the author knew well and admired. Skene, the Principal of Gandeshwar College is another important character drawn full length. The portrait is partly autobiographical. Mr Candler was Principal of Mohindra College Patiala when he wrote this novel. Mr Skene's thick, sun burnt neck broad shoulders and bulging calves which seemed to stretch out of his wide trousers made him appear as the impersonation of strength. His speech to the disaffected students shows what Englishmen think of India's aspiration for freedom. Repressive legislation is thus defended.

You are told that Indians are denied freedom of speech and liberty of the Press but you must remember things are different here. Rumours of cow killing will stir blood to a white heat the story of a defiled mosque will raise a Jihad. There is all the difference between holding a lighted match to an iron safe and to a hay stack. (p. 96)

Possibly as the Principal went on he felt that his arguments were far from convincing. At the close of his oration he throws aside the mask and speaks bluntly.

I hate cant. India is as much the property of the English as the estate of one of your Zemindars is the property of the landlord whose ancestor won it by the sword or was given it for service. It is quite true that if we left the country each community would be at the other's throat. This is one good reason for our staying. But it is not *the* reason. We are here because it is our country.

Mr Candler, unlike most Anglo-Indian writers, has a sense of style. It is unfortunate that he has used his great powers in the interests of political propaganda. The effect that he might have produced had he used his gifts for purposes of art may be judged from the following quotation, reminiscent of Kipling's *City of Dreadful Night*

'Cynthia and Diana there, silvery and chaste, here a bronze pan of fire, phantom of the destroyer, the reverse of Durga's shield, more malignant than the Sun-god, because stealthier and more insidious in her embrace. Merivale felt sick inwardly to think of the primroses glimmering palely in a meadow he knew well by an old ivied church in Devon under the caressing moonlight' (p. 108)

Mr Candler's next novel, *Abdication* (1922) in which he criticizes the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms, is much poorer as a work of art than *Si Ram*.

Miss Irene Burn's novel *The Border Line* was published in 1916. But an interesting account of the performance of *As You Like It* staged by the students of Dyal Singh College in 1912, suggests that the story was written several years before. Miss Burn's attitude towards the Swadeshi movement is expressed through 'the man with a torch' who secretly attends a students' meeting.

'You hate the English folk, yet you speak their language better than your own. You prate of Swadeshi, say you will wear only Indian-made loin-cloths, yet you vaunt your knowledge of the English tongue, you rode here on an English foot-carriage along roads made by the English, where the lamps are fed by the lightning wire and not by country oil. The bomb you will prepare will without doubt be set in an English tobacco-tin, and you will buy or steal English gramophone needles to tear your enemy's flesh' (p. 155)

Mr Henry Bruce is another novelist who has tried to analyse the causes of the 'growing sedition' in India and to expose 'the hidden sources of anarchy'. *The Eurasian*, though published in 1913, shows that it was written in 1910. There is a reference in the story to the death of

King Edward VII and to Dhingra who murdered Sir Curzon Wylie in London. Mr Bruce's analysis of the causes of Indian discontent shows some understanding. The principal cause is the withering contempt in which the Englishman in India, especially the Tommy, holds Indians.¹ Corporal Dekker stands for the British soldier of this type. Dekker once goes to shoot and is suspected of making love to some Mahratta women working in a field. The villagers seize him and taking away his gun

Several writers find in English education the main cause of Indian sedition. Sir Henry Cunningham writing in the eighties speaks of a vast half-educated class with just little knowledge enough to be a dangerous thing and to feel at a loss what to do with its newly found powers. Mrs Penny refers to the overproduction of B.A.s who instead of feeling grateful for their education and enlightenment are idle and discontented. Mrs Kenneth Combe has no doubt that Indian students in England are potential sedition mongers. They belong to a class which screams insolent imprecations against the authority to which it owes its very existence, the class which has endeavoured to undermine the tried loyalty of our beloved Indian army itself. Mrs G. H. Bell's arguments showing that educated India is not fit for self government possess the merit of originality.

Education is not necessarily the faculty or talent for governing

Maker p. 137.)

Mr R. J. Minney has drawn a sketch of a student in Motihari whose half formed mind was the most suitable substance for moulding in the national cause. This is done by reckless politicians very often from questionable motives.

and his game-bag, pinion his hands behind his back and tie him to a wooden post. This treatment of Dekker is regarded as a shock to British prestige. No investigation is made into the affair. A relief party is sent to rescue Dekker. The villagers are fined a few hundred rupees and punitive police are planted upon the village for the next half-year, with a hint not to be too gentle.¹ Dekker does not escape unpunished. He is degraded. His Colonel's address at the degradation of Dekker is characteristic.

"Men of the Dartmoor Regiment," says the gallant Colonel, "let me never hear of such a thing happening again. It ought not to be possible. At present the women of India (and the men are not much more!) make mock of you. My words are for your private guidance, not for publication. I don't say that you should lightly shoot, without orders. But at least, when set upon by natives, use the weapons which God gave you! I say that, and I'll bear you out. Do not hit a native if you can help it, but if you must, then hit hard, and every regiment in India will subscribe to see you through!" (p. 141)

The civilians are generally a little more restrained in their speech than the Colonel of the Dartmoor Regiment, but both the soldier and the civilian think alike. Mrs. Atkins's dislike and distrust of Indians were profound. To both Cherry and Mrs. Atkins, being 'wholesome Englishwomen, natedom as such was indiscriminately heathenish and repugnant'.² The author agrees with Mrs. Atkins and says,

"Doubtless, this shows a sad narrowness of outlook. Possibly, in this very narrowness lies the safety of our race, even if as a result, we have to march down to our ships, and sail away from India" (p. 69)

Mr. Edward Vincent, the Third Assistant Collector at Tulsipur, typifies another class of British officials in India. He was attending a fair at Pahuli when he saw Narayan Rao Wassu standing full on the road holding a 'skimpy cotton umbrella over his head'. Vincent's dignity was

¹ p. 140² p. 69

hurt at the way in which Narayan stared at him and he struck Narayan with his riding whip full across his face.¹ He felt happier and less feverish after that. He did not know that he had struck the grandson of the most dangerous politician in India, G R Wassu of the Viceroy's Council. The incident caused a stir all over India. In the end however Vincent is made to apologize and is transferred to Sind, 'an almost penal colony'. Narayan Rao with the scar on his face not yet healed, goes to England only to become a confirmed nihilist. Mr Bruce does not seem to love India or Indians more than any of his characters, but his analysis of Indian nihilism or anarchism contains elements of truth.

Mr S M Mitra in *Hindupore* (1909) gives his readers a peep behind the Indian unrest. The novel is interesting as giving an Indian's views on the subject. The author brings out Lord Tara to India and takes him to Hindupore, enabling him to see things for himself. Lord Tara falls in love with Princess Kamala a perfection of womanhood and marries her. The novel seems to have been written for propaganda purposes. It is meant to show the folly of the Government in favouring Mohammedans² and failing to realize the force of Hinduism. The rulers are described as callously indifferent to the most cherished feelings of the people. They do not know the people around them. They trust unscrupulous Eurasian inspectors of police more than princes of ancient blood. The Government itself creates unrest and then it appoints commissions to inquire into its causes. According to Mr Mitra it is officials like the Eurasian Hunt, heads of

¹ p 161

In this connexion it is interesting to note the views of some Anglo Indian novelists. Mrs Penny opines in *The Unlucky Mark* that the Mohammedan who is not the glib tongued Hindu because the Mohammedans tenuous to them was preferable to a Hindu regime. Mrs Adams Beck frankly writes in *The Way of Stars* that hatred between the Hindu and the Mohammedan is the great buttress of our power in India. (p 120)

departments like Colonel Ironside who told a Raja to his face 'that after shaking hands with a Hindu he always had a hot bath', and non-officials like Mr 'Toddy, who embitter the relations between Indians and Englishmen Mr Mitra's novel is more like a guide-book than a story with living men or women, or even with interesting incidents His English is not good and his Hindustani is worse But occasionally the monotony of his style is relieved by flashes of humour

56 *Novels of the second period of Indian nationalism*

Partly due to the War, there was not much political agitation in the country during 1914-19 But then came the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms, the Rowlatt Acts, the action of General Dyer at Amritsar, followed by Mahatma Gandhi's Satyagraha movement The history of those strenuous days may be read in several novels that appeared in 1922 and the following years Mrs E W Savin in several of her novels, particularly *Rulers of Men* (1922), Lt-Colonel W P Drury in *The Incendiaries* (1922), Mr R J Minney in *The Road to Delhi* (1923), Mrs G H Bell in *In the Long Run* (1925) and *The Foreigner* (1928), Mr E M Forster in *A Passage to India* (1925), Mr Edward Thompson in *An Indian Day* (1927) and *A Farewell to India* (1930), Mr H K Gordon in *Prem* (1926) and *The Shadow of Abdul* (1928), Mr A C Brown in *Dark Dealing* and Mr Y Endrikar in *Gamblers in Happiness* (1930), Mrs Beatrice Sheepshanks in *The Sword and the Spirit* (1928), Nora K Stange in *Mistress of Ceremonies* (1930) and Mrs Theodore Pennell in *Doorways of the East* (1931) introduce or discuss the problem of Indian self-government, or analyse the causes of India's hostility towards the British These names include some of the greatest writers of Anglo-Indian fiction of recent times

The prevailing note in most of the books of this period is one of surprise at the apparent abdication of authority Most of the writers condemn the Reforms

and their authors whole heartedly In *Rulers of Men* Mrs Savi combines a vivid picture of the Indian unrest with the story of Derek Lang's love for an American girl Derek Lang is Mrs Savi's typical ruler of men He believes that the English will hold India as long as there are diverse races and religions in the country and 'that will be for ever' He does not believe that the Reforms have in any way lessened India's need for the English

They will continue to need us more as greed of power brings out the worst in human nature (p 4)

Derek condemns the interference of the arm chair politicians who have no first hand knowledge of India and who do not understand the psychology of the Indian mind¹ He regrets that strong administration is giving place to vacillation irresolution and timidity

Not many years ago he sighs native editors and printers served terms of imprisonment for publishing political articles not nearly as inflammatory and libellous as those appearing now a days in the Native Press with impunity (p 90)

Indian politicians like Chunder the most vociferous among Bengal patriots, howling for Swaraj according to

That Indians are temperamentally unfit for democracy and love a

shifting now to this foot now to that

Mr Hobart Hampden says either we must go on ruling as we have

is what India wants The people cannot understand our democratic system Equality is a fearsome doctrine to them cutting at the root of caste as it does They are terrified at it Anwar ud Din One of the best of Indians holds extreme views He thinks that the British Government by its curious tendency to impose western methods on eastern people is weakening its own power By western methods he means the privilege of free speech and a free Press He regards these as dangerous weapons in the hands of those who do not understand them

him, are the curse of India. He would give them a dose of the 'cat'. Mrs Savı believes that India wants men like Derek and regrets that General Dyer who 'saved a critical situation by drastic measures' should have been sacrificed to pacify 'native public opinion'. She criticizes the Government as weak-kneed and makes the American heroine say what she probably feels herself.

"If we Americans had the ruling of India, we'd soon show what a strong hand means. The Britisher plays too much to the gallery, so is in danger of losing the game" (p. 328)

In several other novels of Mrs Savı which are not political in intent as the *Rulers of Men*, she expresses her political views indirectly. She makes the Missy Baba say in *Baba and the Black Sheep*.

"Father used to say that India can only be ruled successfully by our compelling the fear as well as the respect of the people. Weakness in their eyes is contemptible, therefore our policy must be determination and strength" (p. 61)

In *On the Rack* she writes

'Everything is in a deuce of a way—labour difficult since Gandhi was allowed a free hand too long, and the price is rotten' (p. 81)

But she does not attach much importance to the 'boast and bravados of a section of half-educated Bengalis', for 'it will be put down with a strong hand when the need arises'. 'Who notices the barking of the street dogs?' she asks in *The Reproof of Chance*—"that's what it amounts to". She advocates that dangerous and rabid dogs should be muzzled and done away with 'lest they communicate rabies to the rest'. She is sure that the Government will put down sedition with a strong hand, but is surprised at its policy of 'shutting the stable door after the steed is stolen, in matters of Indian politics'.

Mrs G. H. Bell points out 'the outrageous error' of Indian politics of the times and says

'that the politician in India took his eye off the land and

turned it on to the political situation in Westminster watched the betting rather than the game

She says in *In the Long Run*

Once British rule is subordinated to Indian rule within the frontiers of India it will have no word of *command* capable of repressing anarchy and tyranny ' (p 31)

Nora K Strange comments in passing on political conditions in India in *Mistress of Ceremonies* (1930)—a commonplace novel of Anglo Indian life She agrees with the fellow who said that India would be lost on the floor of the House of Commons Self government according to her, if granted to India, will lead to chaos

In the past history of Kanara I sometimes read a vision of the future of India if it were left to its own devices Terrible internal strife followed by a series of foreign invasions and the final conquerors—the jungle with its attendant hand maid malaria (p 193)

She has every sympathy for Indians who honestly mean to do their duty by their country But when the crisis comes the white man who will make good in India will be the free booter the bold buccaneer with a turn for guerrilla warfare

Mr R J Minney's novel *The Road to Delhi* presents a vivid account of political India ten years ago The *motif* of the novel is the disillusionment of a village boy who as a student at the Presidency College Calcutta is drawn into the vortex of Indian politics repents of his

What would happen if the English were to leave India is a favourite theme of Anglo Indian novelists of the first quarter of the twentieth century Mrs B. ...

activities later, and ends by becoming a preacher of loyalty to the Government. Mr Minney cannot understand the agitation against the Rowlatt Bills, particularly when it was expressly stated that the repressive laws 'would not be put into action unless the need arose'. He accounts for the Non-Co-operation Movement by saying that 'the stern repression of the trouble in Amritsar by General Dyer supplied the leaders with a monster grievance'.

'He [Mr Gandhi] accordingly preached the creed of non-violence. And this, together with his fasting as a form of penance for the sin of bloodshed that occurred on his account and his manifest other-world grief, gave him a semblance of piety that was soon to gather into a halo of saintliness. He ordained that the country should fast too, knowing that each pang of hunger would cause the people to brood on the reason for their fasting' (p. 162).

A vivid account of the *bartals* in connexion with the visit of the Prince of Wales is given.

'When the morning of the 17th November, in the year of grace 1921, dawned in Calcutta, it dawned upon a dead city. Even in the European quarter there was not the slightest sign of native activity. A few sahibs were out driving their own motors. Even private chauffeurs refrained from work. Not a bullock cart, not a taxi, not a hackney carriage, not a refuse cart. The streets lay unscavenged. Not a native shop was open. The bazaar was silent and deserted. When night came the streets were unlighted, until some sahibs went round carrying ladders, to light a few lamps. The men in the employ of the gas company were on strike and many streets were without light altogether. It was the completest *bartal* imaginable. It surpassed the expectations even of those who had worked so hard for its achievement' (p. 209).

Because Europeans and loyal Indians could not tolerate another such *bartal* any more than the Government, they organized themselves into a band of civil guards. Clashes with the followers of Gandhi were inevitable. Serious riots occurred, followed by imprisonment on a large scale.

The jails were filled but room was found for still more. Thousands were taken into custody and still further thousands offered themselves as volunteers. It was a bitter struggle (p. 211)

Motihari, the hero of the book gets involved in the riots like other students and takes delight in the insults offered to Europeans. When his patron H. G. Thoughts is felled to the earth with a heavy stick he suddenly recalls the past kindnesses of the American. This man had saved his life, had raced with death for him, had given him a house in Calcutta and had helped him in other ways. Motihari is transformed. He bids farewell to his companions even to his love for Nalini, and in spite of the odds against him becomes a preacher of co-operation and loyalty. Motihari's transformation is as improbable as the love of a Hindu girl for the adopted son of a Mohammedan egg seller.

Lt. Colonel W. P. Drury's novel *The Incendiaries* takes for its theme the folly of well-meaning Englishmen who allow themselves to be exploited by clever Indian seditionists. In this novel we have an incredibly foolish Member of Parliament and an incredibly vulgar and cowardly official who involve themselves in German intrigues to end British rule in India. Colonel Drury's picture of Anglo-Indian officials does them little credit. Their arrogance and inordinate pride are realistically painted. The chief incident of the story is the projected attack on a picnic party by a mob of Indian conspirators. The book is entertaining enough but it is not likely to please Anglo-Indians.

Mr. H. K. Gordon's first novel *Prem* was published in 1926. It is sponsored by Sir Michael O'Dwyer who has contributed a foreword to it. The book that Sir Michael has lauded to the skies as a genuine book about the India of to-day is very little more than a bundle of prejudices and half-truths characteristic of the class of Anglo-Indians of whom Sir Michael himself is a leading

representative One quotation will suffice to give the reader an idea of Mr Gordon's political views

'No, most certainly the villager does not want the Englishman to go He is a simple-minded soul, easily duped into riots and excesses, and sometimes stampeded though never convinced, by specious arguments and appeals to his passions. Yet in his heart of hearts he has nothing but contempt and suspicion for the froth of the cities from which the politicians are recruited, for none knows better than he the greed and dishonesty of the lawyers, the corruption and sycophancy of the native courts, the exaction of petty officials' (p 73)

He does not think that Indians could govern themselves and remarks that 'Englishmen were running, and that only Englishmen could run, an administrative machine designed by themselves' He holds that the universities are 'turning out fresh batches of potential malcontents' every year He condemns the Reforms scheme concocted between themselves by two 'amateur constitution-mongers' and regrets the gradual disappearance of the 'easy personal contact between ruler and ruled', the foundation of the 'most wonderful Empire-building experiment that the world has ever seen' His characters are mere symbols chosen to illustrate a theory In Prem Narain we have the honest, hard-working, long-suffering agriculturist who, by senseless extravagance, brings himself into the clutches of the village bania Badri Pershad represents an exacting landlord whose one desire is to dispossess Prem Narain of his land, by fair means or foul He is contrasted with Thakar Harpal Singh, the old-fashioned but generous landlord, loyal to the backbone, who is horrified at the idea of the English handing over the 'reins of Government to a lot of chattering lawyers' In Mangal Ram, 'the failed B A', we have a caricature of the educated Indian, 'a hybrid product of western education', who could speak and write English in the idiom of the babu, who had 'a profound contempt for those of his fellow-countrymen for whom their country's ways were good

enough but who had not acquired the faintest understanding of English culture and English ideals. In Graham we have the typical District Magistrate the *mai bap* of the poor down trodden agriculturists who though shorn of much of his authority is still looked up to in his district as the local embodiment of the might of the sarkar. Running between the story is the love of Prem Narain for Parbatti the beautiful wife of Mangal Ram. In making Parbatti declare her love for Prem Narain Mr Gordon gives us a picture of Indian womanhood that is not impossible but highly improbable. No Hindu wife makes love in the manner of Parbatti. The parting scene, however is touching.

The woman gained her piteous victory—the woman and the Brahmin. She was not Prem's she never could be Prem's. That rigid white clad figure in its corpse like sheetings was no more his than if in fact she was already shrouded for the final journey to the burning ghat. (p. 319)

Mr Gordon's next novel, *The Shadow of Abdul* (1928) is a distinct improvement upon *Prem*. Its plot is simple like that of *Prem* and it is better constructed and more human. In this novel the artist has overcome the propagandist. If we can admit that an Oxford graduate a Member of the Legislative Assembly and the foster brother of the Raja of Dharamkot turning a revolutionary could adopt dacoity as his profession the plot may be said to run on smoothly and naturally. The inhuman outrage of Abdul the *masalehi* on Sylvia at the tender age of twelve, colours all her life and accounts for her extraordinary hatred of all Indians. Her openly insulting and ungrateful treatment of Joshi seems inexplicable but for the twist that her character underwent in her earlier years. The undisguised contempt in which Englishwomen hold Indians only serves to fan the fire of race hatred which no Hugh Frampton can suppress. Joshi suffers the extreme penalty of law as a political dacoit. In restoring Sylvia to her father and her lover he

generously repays the little acts of kindness shown to him by Hugh during his undergraduate days at Oxford. In Joshi the author seems to be making an effort to overcome his racial prejudices. If he has not quite succeeded in doing so, it is because he is not a greater artist than he is. Sir George Delahey is the usual type of Englishman who keeps India safe for England. He shows a Spartan or Roman ideal of duty in suppressing all feelings of love for his daughter, when they clash with duty. As examples of the author's descriptive power we may mention the political dinner at Simla, the ball given by the Raja of Dharamkot at Mussourie, 'the Subalterns' Paradise'—a ball which is interpreted as a cunning blow to British prestige by a hypersensitive Anglo-India.

57 *Novels of the third period*

In the novels of the third period of Indian nationalism covering only the last few years, the prevailing note is one of sadness and regret as voiced by Mr Edward Thompson. There is occasionally an attempt to understand things from the Indian point of view. Besides Mr Thompson, two other novelists, Mr Endrikar and Mrs B Sheepshanks, indicate some change in the outlook.

In *Gamblers in Happiness*, Mr. Y. Endrikar is nervous because the 'agitators have succeeded in making an impression on the agriculturists and trading classes'

'Mind you, I do not say, we have no friends left, amongst the older and more level-headed men there are many who regard the present agitation with profound alarm, if only because of its disastrous effect on the younger generation which is beginning to lose the tradition of respect for its elders. So far our Indian subordinates, with hardly an exception, have remained staunch, but the strain on their loyalty is severe' (p. 93)

He does not consider Indians fit for self-government because of the climate of India.

'My private opinion is that unless the Almighty sees fit

to change the climate of India India will never make good alone (p 136)

The changed outlook of Englishmen is also shown by the following sympathetic observation

We Englishmen have not the imagination to put ourselves in the place of an Indian I mean an educated Indian How should we like it if a foreign race imposed themselves upon us kept all the important posts and plums in their own hands and told us we were not fit to govern ourselves? (p 135)

Mrs Beatrice Sheepshanks's *The Snord and the Spirit* is an interesting addition to the large number of Anglo Indian political novels Mrs Anne Stirling who became a widow shortly after her arrival in India surprised everybody by going to a dreadful place called Andhari leaving the delights of Calcutta Her love for Acland an unhappily married educationist the activities of Indian revolutionaries in India and the usual glimpses of Anglo Indian life form the substance of this novel Gopi Nath Bannerji one of the Servants of the People a cultured Indian of refined manners who becomes a revolutionary is sympathetically drawn Many a Gandhian phrase is put into his mouth For example he says to Mrs Stirling

No enemy to you Mrs Stirling I seek only freedom for ourselves Freedom to rule badly if need be Freedom to make mistakes The rule of the west is for evil and not for good Hatred has filled my heart towards this evil I seek so far as within me lies to destroy it But if any time it is within my power to do you service it shall be done (p 81)

Acland is informed about the revolutionary activities of Gopi Nath and he warns the Superintendent of Police but Mr Payne considers it humiliating to be warned by a member of the educational service and snubs him Moreover he does not want to encourage disaffection by means of prosecutions The result is a riot The treasury is looted, banks are set on fire and white men battered to death followed by Martial Law and firing at a meeting

in the Mango Park in short, the whole tragedy of Amritsar is repeated That is how Gopi Nath Bannerji learns the difference between the sword and soul force as weapons for gaining political freedom He says to Mrs Stirling

“The dead have taught me, that to fight the West with the West’s own weapons is both wrong and foolish . Now I have learnt that by the sword, no man be he of the East or of the West—can truly conquer” (p 298)

The story has been worked up in a not too clear, mystical vein, though it is apparent from the beginning that Acland and Mrs Stirling will marry The one beautiful passage in the book is at the end when Mrs Stirling is moving out of Andhari

‘The train roared onwards, yet beyond its sound and fury, there lay on either side the peace of dawn For mile upon mile there was little to see but low scrub and cactus, an occasional palm, a heron motionless by a pool of stagnant water Through a sleeping village they flashed Here was a group of mud huts and a well, here was a temple, and a banyan tree Upon the outskirts of the village, through a veil of mist, she saw the dark figure of a man driving his cattle to the fields And through the haze of whiteness she saw another man, his face turned towards Mecca And he was upon his knees’ (p 319)

Mr Hamish Blair in ‘1957’ looks forward to the centenary of the Indian Mutiny, when the British authority in India would be reduced to a shadow, and the life and property of English people would not be safe There would arise a Hardy of the Volunteer Corps who, like the free-lances of the eighteenth century, would save the English and restore their lost prestige A number of Indians are introduced as rebels, who almost exterminate the civil and military population of Delhi After converting a princess of a friendly Mohammedan State to Christianity, the hero is married to her and appointed Governor of Bengal Mr Blair dislikes Delhi as the

capital of India and makes the Government return to Calcutta

In my opinion Delhi stands condemned as the capital of India. It stands condemned as a capital at all. Delhi is not a capital. It is a battleground, a graveyard. It is a centre of ruin and desolation, not a city which should be rebuilt as the capital of the British Empire in India.

British power rests upon the sea, and that is why the founders of the Empire established their capital at Calcutta, one of the great ports of the world, ensconced in the upper reaches of a river which no stranger can navigate with safety. (p. 329)¹

Mrs Theodore Pennell (Miss A. Sorabji by birth) in *Doorways of the East* (1931) traces the interaction of East and West in the life story of Ram Ditta and his wife Kamala. Mrs Pennell opens her story in the Punjab with a tribute to her husband and gives a pen portrait of Mr Pennell, the great Bannu doctor, tall, lithe and blue-eyed who looked like a young god in his Pathan costume. Ram Ditta is ignored after his marriage and the rest of the book is devoted to the experiences of Kamala in

to believe in free love

to tree all of a sudden

Khaddar and *Swaraj*,

and a believer in the cult of the bomb. She is killed by the bomb which was meant for the Governor at a University Convocation. The plot and characterization of this story are much poorer than those of Mrs Pennell's previous novel *The Children of the Border*. In her criticism of the demand for *Swaraj* she is very bitter more

¹ It is interesting to note that Sir G. O. Trevelyan, writing in 1864, thought that Calcutta was quite unsuitable as the capital of India. His reasons are that Calcutta is not sanitary, that its climate is pestilential, that it is not central, that at Calcutta the supreme Government cannot be

bitter than any Anglo-Indian writer. Her chapter on *Khaddar* reads like a political essay. Ram Ditta, who calls his ancestors 'idiotic', is her ideal hero, as Kamala is her *bête noir*. Kamala has no balance, and is entirely swayed by vanity. Mrs. Pennell intends to show that a girl having no background of religion and family training must end badly. But even in fiction Kamala's fate seems to be too cruel. The following passage summarizes Mrs. Pennell's view of the relation between India and England, which is remarkable for its originality.

'It is, to my mind, absurd to talk of friendship or enmity between England and India, as we do. An autocratic man looks upon his wife as his possession but she is his wife, even if she has no glory but that which is a reflection of his own. And if she has a fortune, she is all the more prized by him. Well, India is the wife with a fortune. . ' (p. 133)

Mr. S. Woods Hill's book *Mahatma* has a political purpose to show that the story of India is the story of corruption, racial animosities and utter selfishness of the communities that make up Hindustan. Pincham suffers because he is honest in the midst of unashamed, rampant dishonesty. Ganekhar (later on hailed as Mahatma) thus expresses the truth about India to Pincham.

'"You are at the centre of four warring forces. They are tearing India apart, the India which is false to itself, is tainted with unscrupulous commercialism and selfish opportunism. The worst of East and West is fused in Modern India."'
(p. 218)

The book is of little use.

CHAPTER IX

E M FORSTER AND EDWARD THOMPSON

58 *'A Passage to India'*

MR FORSTER'S *A Passage to India* is an oasis in the desert of Anglo Indian fiction. It is a refreshing book, refreshing in its candour, sincerity, fairness and art, and is worth more than the whole of the trash that passes by the name of Anglo Indian fiction, a few writers excepted. It is a clever picture of Englishmen in India, a subtle portraiture of the Indian, especially the Moslem mind, and a fascinating study of the problems arising out of the contact of India with the West. It aims at no solution and offers no explanation; it merely records with sincerity and insight the impressions of an Englishman of letters of his passage through post War India, an Englishman who is a master of his craft and who combines an original vision with a finished artistry. Like all original books it is intensely provoking. It does not flatter the Englishman and it does not aim at pleasing the Indian; it is likely to irritate both. It is not an imaginary picture though it is imaginatively conceived. Most Anglo Indian writers, as we have seen, write of India and of Indians with contempt; a very few (mostly historians) go to the other extreme. Mr Forster's object is merely to discover how people behave in relation to one another under the conditions obtaining in India at present. That he does not win applause either from India or Anglo India is a tribute to his impartiality.

Mr Forster's theme bristles with difficulties. He takes for his subject the conflict of races. Race feeling is strong in the English; it is stronger in Anglo Indians for reasons which can be easily understood. Indians, on the other hand, are very sensitive to insults, real or imagined. Though a conquered people they have not forgotten their past, nor their ancient culture or civilization. It is

what Mr Ralph Wight has called 'this almost fratricidal subject' that Mr Forster has chosen as the theme of his novel.

(1) *Its plot* The plot of this novel is simple Mrs. Moore and Agatha Quested come to Chandrapore to meet Ronny Heaslop, an Anglo-Indian magistrate, and to see India. Miss Quested, a somewhat stupid though sincere girl, feels that neither the Anglo-Indian official nor the Indian servants of Europeans represent real India. She thinks that they are a screen behind which real India hides But she does not or cannot see behind the screen Mrs. Moore, however, soon makes the acquaintance of an Indian, Dr Aziz, assistant to the Civil Surgeon, Major Callender Aziz is a cultured Indian, 'sensitive rather than responsive In every remark he found a meaning, but not always the true meaning, and his life, though vivid, was largely a dream' He invites Mrs. Moore and Miss Quested to a picnic at the Marabar caves Miss Quested, more or less a victim of some hallucination, accuses the Indian of attempted rape It is not quite clear what had happened, but the author makes it plain that Dr Aziz was innocent Miss Quested's story leads to the arrest of Dr Aziz, and exposes the racial weaknesses of the small English colony of Chandrapore.

'All over Chandrapore that day the Europeans were putting aside their normal personalities and sinking themselves in their community Pity, wrath, heroism, filled them, but the power of putting two and two together was annihilated' (p. 166)

The supposed outrage is regarded as a deliberate insult to Englishmen in India, and to the British Empire. No Englishman, with the exception of Fielding, the Principal of Government College, is prepared to listen to a single word in defence of Aziz The doctor is tried by a Hindu magistrate Miss Quested, to the disgust of her compatriots, in the end declares that she had probably made a mistake, and Aziz has to be acquitted If the supposed

insult to an English girl by an Indian excited the worst passions of the Anglo Indian community the behaviour of the Indians on his release which they hailed as their victory, was unseemly in the highest degree Aziz himself leaves Government service and betakes himself to a State never forgetting or forgiving the way in which he had been treated He is bitter against all Europeans making no exception even in the case of his friend Fielding This is the main plot

(ii) *Mr Forster's portraiture of Anglo India* The story opens in a striking manner which at once attracts attention A few educated Mohammedans are discussing whether it is possible to make friends with Englishmen In England perhaps but not in India think Hamidullah and Mahmoud Ali The latter's ironical remarks deserve reproduction

For my own part I find such profound differences among our rulers Red nose mumbles Turton talks distinctly Mrs Turton takes bribes Mrs Red nose does not and cannot because so far there is no Mrs Red nose (p 9)

While they are discussing this interesting topic Aziz is sent for by the Civil Surgeon Aziz thinks that Callender has done so just to show his power not because he is wanted As a matter of fact he found that Major Callender was not at home A servant indifferently tells him that Major Callender had driven away half an hour before leaving no message for him Two English ladies now take possession of his tonga without even a word of thanks leaving him to pay the driver later on These little incidents make Aziz's blood boil His heart is full and at a word of kindness from Mrs Moore whom he meets by chance he blurts out the tale of his wrongs This is one side of the picture In the club where the English community was staging *Cousin Kate* the reader is given a glimpse of the other side The windows of the club are barred though it is uncomfortably warm lest the servants see the acting of their mem sahibs The

orchestra played the National Anthem, which Mr. Forster calls the Anthem of the Army of Occupation, it only served to remind every member of the club that he or she was a Britisher in exile. A lady, who was a nurse in a native state before her marriage, prides herself on keeping aloof from the natives. Mrs. Callender thinks that it is real kindness to let a native die, and she does not care whether he goes to heaven or hell so long as he does not come near her. 'They give me the creeps,' she says honestly. Mr. Turton, the District Magistrate of Chandrapore, invites Miss Quested and Mrs. Moore to his 'Bridge Party'—a party meant to bridge the gulf between East and West. Ronny is not pleased to learn that his mother had made the acquaintance of an Indian, for he holds that whether the native swaggers or cringes, he is always trying to score. The Indians discuss the Collector's 'Bridge Party' among themselves, and Mohammad Ali suspects that it is the result of 'orders from the L G.' This party is not a success. Mrs. Turton is genuinely grieved when she is goaded to 'work' by her husband and cries '“Oh those purdah women! I never thought any would come. Oh dear!”' Mrs. Turton cannot forget that she is superior to them all, and knowing only how to deal with servants, is unfamiliar with the more polite forms of speech used in addressing respectable Indians. Mr. Turton 'who knew something to the discredit of nearly every one of his guests' had no illusions about his 'Bridge Party' and was a very unsatisfactory host. Other Englishmen, with the exception of Fielding, having to provide their women folk with tea and to advise them about dogs, &c, naturally could not be expected to pay much attention to their Indian guests. Fielding alone resents the conduct of his countrymen, and he arranges a tea party to which he invites Mrs. Moore, Miss Quested, Dr. Aziz, and Professor Godbole, thus enabling the East to meet the West under more favourable conditions. This party was not a success either, and every one felt cross or wretched. The official

and the unofficial attempts to bridge the gulf between the East and the West fail miserably, though it is clear that in the case of Mr Fielding's party it is Mr Heaslop who is responsible for its failure.

Mr Forster's portraiture of Anglo Indian life has called forth bitter protests from Anglo India, and he has been accused of ignorance if not of unfairness in his delineation of the English colony at Chandrapore. It has to be admitted that most of the Anglo Indians from the Collector downwards do not appear in a favourable light. Turton is a burra sahib much too conscious of his position before whom other Europeans cringe. His hectoring manner to Fielding is specially offensive and typical of the attitude of a Heaven-born towards a by-no means unimportant officer of the Indian Educational Department. But Turton's behaviour is the result of Fielding's pro Indian proclivities. Fielding is not pukka. That is his main fault. His profession inspires distrust, his ideas are fatal to caste. Though the sahibs tolerated him for the sake of his good heart and strong body, it is their wives who decided that he was not a sahib and for that reason disliked him. He had to pay a heavy price for associating with Indians and for his unconventionality and independence. Those critics who see in Turton's behaviour to Fielding something unreal forget that it is not as types that Fielding and Turton have been delineated by Mr Forster. They are individuals. All Collectors are not Turtons, as all college Principals are not Fieldings. Major Callender, similarly, is not representative of Civil Surgeons. His treatment of Aziz is not typical of the treatment by Englishmen of their Indian subordinates. But Callender's natural contempt and insolence are heightened by the knowledge that his subordinate is more efficient as a surgeon than himself. Mr Forster is always careful to individualize his characters, even when he is painting them as representatives of a class. The traces of exaggeration, unreality or unnaturalness that

Anglo-Indians find in these characters are perhaps due to their habit of confounding the character with the type. The individual and class characteristics have been so cleverly combined in almost all the characters of Mr Forster's novel, that even his minor characters have an exquisite sense of completeness. Mr Forster is not so much a portrait painter as a psychologist. He observes human beings under certain conditions. Environment as affecting character is specially marked in his novels. He knows, as 'Affable Hawk' is careful to explain in the *New Statesman*, that often the atmosphere 'distorts human relations, making people behave wildly and foolishly who, under other circumstances, would be neither wild nor foolish'. Just as in the novels of Mr. Wells, clashes of class consciousness and the confusions of the social order make it impossible for people to behave properly towards each other, similarly in *A Passage to India* racial consciousness and the contradictions of a system once established firmly on the distinction between a conquering race and a subject people, but now in the process of rapid decay, make the Turtons and Burtons and Callenders of Chandrapore behave so foolishly that they appear to be 'wildly improbable and unreal'.¹ Turton and Callender, however, are minor characters.

In order to trace the influence of 'atmosphere' upon character, and to become familiar with Mr Forster's method, we may study in some detail the character of Ronny Heaslop. Callenders and Turtons have been so long in India that they have been completely transformed into what Indians call 'sun-dried bureaucrats'. Ronny is in the process of such transformation. Through Miss Quested and Mrs Moore (fresh arrivals from England), Mr Forster enables us to see Ronny's gradual transformation into an Anglo-Indian.

'Although Miss Quested had known Ronny well in England, she felt well advised to visit him before deciding to be his

¹ Mr E. A. Horne, *The New Statesman*, 1924, p. 544

wife India had developed sides of his character that she had never admired. His self complacency, his censoriousness, his lack of subtlety, all grew vivid beneath a tropic sky. He seemed more indifferent than of old to what was passing in the minds of his fellows, more certain that he was right about them or that if he was wrong it didn't matter. When proved wrong, he was particularly exasperating. (p. 78)

He is not a bad man, but is placed in trying circumstances. A few years' stay in the country has made him think poorly of Indians, and the association of his mother and Miss Quested with Indians irritates him. To the surprise of the English ladies, he behaves in an unpardonable manner to Aziz and Godbole at Fielding's tea party, and orders them about. But after the party, he is ashamed of his curtness and tries to make up for it by agreeing to drive in the motor car of the Nawab Bahadur, whom he calls one of our show Indians. A little later, however, he works himself into a fury when his peon, Krishna, does not bring the files from his office.

Ronny stormed, shouted, howled, and only the experienced observer could tell that he was not angry, did not much want the files, and only made a row because it was the custom' (p. 95)

After the Marabar muddle, Miss Quested, the English girl, confesses that she has made a mistake. Ronny, the Anglo Indian, does not listen to her. Mrs. Moore, his own mother, agrees with Miss Quested in thinking Aziz to be innocent. Ronny, assuming the pose of a martyr, decides that his mother should leave India at once, so as to prevent her from prejudicing the prosecution and letting down the English. It is that moral degeneration which sometimes creeps over Englishmen in India, as a result of the peculiar conditions of life in this country, that Mr. Forster paints so vividly. Mrs. Moore, with her vein of mysticism and spiritual kinship with India, does not fail to notice the change that has come over her boy.

How Ronny revelled in the drawbacks of his situation!

How he did rub it in that he was not in India to behave pleasantly, and derived positive satisfaction therefrom! He reminded her of his Public School days. The traces of young-man humanitarianism had sloughed off, and he talked like an intelligent and embittered boy. His words without his voice might have impressed her, but when she heard the self-satisfied lilt of them, when she saw the mouth moving so complacently and competently beneath the little red nose, she felt, quite illogically, that this was not the last word on India. One touch of regret—not the canny substitute but the true regret from the heart—would have made him a different man, and the British Empire a different institution' (p 49)

In spite of differences of opinion as regards the reality of Anglo-Indian portraits, and in spite of a few mistakes, Mr. Forster's knowledge of Anglo-India shows insight and penetration. The following passage illustrates the indifference of Anglo-Indians to literature and art.

'Save for this annual incursion, they left literature alone. The men had no time for it, the women did nothing that they could not share with the men. Their ignorance of the Arts was notable, and they lost no opportunity of proclaiming it to one another, it was the Public School attitude, flourishing more vigorously than it can yet hope to do in England' (p 38)

The menu of Anglo-India is interesting

'Julienne soup full of bullety bottled peas, pseudo-cottage bread, fish full of branching bones, pretending to be plaice, more bottled peas with the cutlets, trifle, sardines on toast the menu of Anglo-India. A dish might be added or subtracted as one rose or fell in the official scale, the peas might rattle less or more, the sardines and the vermouth be imported by a different firm, but the tradition remained, the food of exiles, cooked by servants who did not understand it. Adela thought of the young men and women who had come out before her, P & O full after P & O full, and had been set down to the same food and the same ideas, and been snubbed in the same good-humoured way until they kept to the accredited themes and began to snub others' (p 46)

It is such passages that reveal the skill, subtlety, and pene-

tration of Mr Forster's method. Scattered throughout the book there are witty remarks and home thrusts. He tells us that Sunday in the East is an equivocal day, an excuse for slacking, that nothing enrages Anglo India more than the lantern of reason if it is exhibited for one moment after its extinction is decreed, that the British Parliament according to Anglo India is a caucus of cranks and cravens, that every human act of Anglo India is tainted with officialism, and that where there is officialism every human relationship suffers. He knows like Fielding the Principal that India as conceived by the club at Chandrapore is different from the India of actual experience.

But then the club moved slowly, it still declared that few Mohammedans and no Hindus would eat at an Englishman's table, and that all Indian ladies were in impenetrable purdah. Individually it knew better, as a club it declined to change (p. 63).

(iii) *Mr Forster's portraiture of Moslem India*. Mr Forster knows Moslem India well. His seventeen years' friendship with Syed Ross Masood, to whom the book is dedicated, shows this. He has not only seen Aziz and his type from outside, but has lived with them, visited them and enjoyed their hospitality on a footing of equality. It is through Fielding that Mr Forster speaks. It is through Fielding that the reader is enabled to have a peep into the social life of the small group of Mohammedans who surround Aziz. Mr Forster gives us a full length portrait of Dr Aziz. He is a man of culture and refinement and delights his hearers with verses from Hafiz, Hali and Iqbal. Though not religious, the sight of a beautiful mosque awakens his sense of beauty, and reminds him of Islam of which he is inordinately proud. He glories in the recollection of the Mogul Empire and feels that India is his own land, in spite of a few flabby Hindus who had preceded him there and a few chilly English who had succeeded. He loves his profession

and uses the surgeon's knife skilfully, but the boredom of régime and hygiene repels him, and after inoculating a man for enteric, he would go away and drink unfiltered water himself. When in a cheerful spirit he enjoys being misunderstood by Englishmen. He is a widower, and cherishes the memory of his dead wife. He has a keen sense of humour.

'“If I'm biking in English dress—starch collar, hat with ditch—they take no notice. When I wear a fez, they cry, ‘Your lamp’s out!’ Lord Curzon did not consider this when he urged natives of India to retain their picturesque costumes—Hooray!”’ (p. 64)

A visit from Fielding makes Aziz conscious of the horror of his bungalow near the bazaar and he becomes sardonic in its description. Touched by Fielding's kindness he shows his dead wife's photograph to him, saying with emotion, ‘I showed her to you because I have nothing else to show’. One aspect of Aziz's character, somewhat unduly emphasized, is his obsession with sex.

‘He had learnt all he needed concerning his own constitution many years ago, thanks to the social order into which he had been born, and when he came to study medicine he was repelled by the pedantry and fuss with which Europe tabulates the facts of sex’ (p. 100)

‘Aziz upheld the proprieties, though he did not invest them with any moral halo, and it was here that he chiefly differed from an Englishman. His conventions were social’ (p. 101)

In a conversation with Fielding he refers to Miss Quested as a woman with practically no breasts, and is not aware of the bad taste of the remark. He goes on

“For the City Magistrate they shall be sufficient perhaps, and he for her. For you I shall arrange a lady with breasts like mangoes.” (p. 118)

A simple question about the number of his wives upsets him and he feels confused. The trial enraged him because he was mentioned in connexion with a woman who had

no personal beauty Fielding as well as Mr Forster's readers are worried at his sexual snobbery and derived sensuality—the sort that classes a mistress among motor-cars if she is beautiful, and among eye flies if she isn't. The estrangement between Aziz and Fielding is attributable to defects in Aziz's character. Aziz is unable to appreciate the heroism of the English girl who being pushed forward by all her friends and the entire British Raj suddenly stops and stands up for justice. He has no sense of evidence and is carried away by the sequence of his emotions.

Suspicion in the Oriental is a sort of malignant tumour a mental malady that makes him self conscious and unfriendly suddenly he trusts and mistrusts at the same time in a way the Westerner cannot comprehend. It is his demon as the Westerner's is hypocrisy (p 281)

Aziz is not a hero and he has many repellent features. He does not show any extraordinary quality marking him out as the superior of the plain Miss Quested the sincere Mrs Moore or the wise and broad minded Fielding. But he is still a remarkable creation.

Other Indian characters are comparatively unimportant. The portrait of Mr Harris the Eurasian chauffeur of the Nawab Bahadur is well drawn. Mr Harris grows self conscious when both English and Indians were present not knowing to whom he belonged. The Ruling Race seemed to have contributed little to his face beyond bad teeth which peered out of it pathetically and seemed to say

What's it all about? Don't worry me so you blacks and whites. Here I am stuck in dam India same as you and you got to fit me in better than this (p 89)

It is doubtful whether Mr Forster knew Hindus intimately. Professor Godbole's conservatism and his religious ecstasy his good nature and his small lies his tranquillity and his polite enigmatic manner are all

caught by the deft pen of Mr Forster But he is not interesting, any more than Dr Panna Lal, Mr Dass the Magistrate, the Battacharyas or Ram Chand Mr Forster's description of the Gokul Ashtami in an Indian State is a beautiful picture of Hindu superstitions, faith and fervour, vulgarity and mysticism

Mr Forster is not a propagandist He is scrupulously fair He has no didactic aim either But it is possible that in one of the self-communings of Aziz, he is communicating his own vision of India of the future

'This evening he longed to compose a new song which should be acclaimed by multitudes and even sung in the fields In what language shall it be written? And what shall it announce? He vowed to see more of Indians who were not Moham-medans, and never to look backward It is the only healthy course Of what help, in this latitude and hour, are the glories of Cordova and Samarcand? They have gone, and while we lament them the English occupy Delhi and exclude us from East Africa Islam itself, though true, throws cross-lights over the path to freedom The song of the future must transcend creed' (p 269)

59 Mr. Edward Thompson

Mr. Edward Thompson, who had already earned distinction as a writer on India, attempts in *An Indian Day* (1927) to interpret and analyse the political India of to-day. His analysis reminds one of Mr Forster But while Mr Forster is primarily a novelist, and merely describes the clash of the two races with the help of living characters and dramatic situations, without offering any solution of the perplexing problem, Mr Thompson not only attempts a diagnosis of what *The Times* calls 'Indian melancholy', but suggests a remedy He possesses Mr Forster's fairness, if not his detachment He is more serious than Mr Forster and more fastidious He has comparatively little plot, and he fails to carry the reader along with him by the interest of his story. As a novel *An Indian Day* is

inferior to *A Passage to India* 'Mr Forster's imagination' as Mr Edwin Muir points out in *The Nation and Athenaeum* rose with the action Mr Thompson's surrenders before it¹ But his knowledge of India is equally intimate and his sympathy equally human and sensitive

His hero Vincent Hamar is a young English magistrate who is not enamoured of Indians But having decided a political case in favour of the Indian accused he is regarded by his countrymen in India as pro native which is interpreted to mean anti English seditious a public danger a traitor a socialist, a communist an atheist a bolshevist Anglo India is scandalized and Hamar is transferred to Vishnugram an untidy mofussil town, with a population bursting through its sleeves of streets and tenements

It was a place of half baked babus cringing insolent, seditious wholly unprimitive except in their personal habits and sanitation and a European station that chattered and quarrelled quarrelled and chattered (p 8)

He is treated with suspicion by the small group of English residents at Vishnugram while the Indians present addresses of welcome to him gratefully alluding to his impartiality as a judge There he meets Hilda Mannerling an independent spirited girl who prefers solitude India's greatest gift, to the compulsory sociability of the United English Nation She is fond of lonely rides to the romantic ruins of Vishnugram and appears to be the Spirit of Freedom looking on a world in servitude Vincent Hamar falls in love with her His love is not immediately returned but Hilda yields in the end out of admiration for his devotion to duty and his scrupulous justice that make him appear pro native and anti Indian by turns

With this unexciting plot Mr Thompson draws some very fine characters both English and Indian He has

also given us some of the most beautiful and poetical descriptions of the Indian dawn and midday, and Indian life and scenery Mr Thompson clearly shows how racial prejudices affect our opinion of the same man Hamar, the just Englishman of the Lambertgarh case, who was acclaimed by Indians as 'the one pure spirit in a naughty service', was called by the same Indians an unscrupulous perverter of the law because of his judgement in the Vishnugram Conspiracy case Hamar sympathized with the Chatterjee brothers and felt that they were doing what Bruce, William Tell, and Washington had done with the full applause of later ages But what could he do? As a judge, he 'had to do his job'.

Mr Thompson has great admiration for the type of man like Hamar who 'gets on with the job' irrespective of what others say about him He has known just magistrates like Hamar who were misunderstood both by their countrymen and by Indians

The scene in the record room of Hamar's court is full of gentle touches, showing Mr Thompson's first-hand knowledge of Indian subordinates The Old Seristadar, Abdul Jabber Khan, a Mussulman with a vast, snowy beard, showed him the court records, 'with the maximum of courtesy and the minimum of information' Hamar is stung by a hornet and loses his temper The old man looks upon him rebukingly, and Hamar apologizes to him, but he wanted to give a wiggling to this 'white-bearded father of slackness' He is surprised and ashamed because he does not understand what he thought was a Bengali word, but which turns out to be English.

Besides Hamar, Mr Thompson's sympathies are for Findlay, the selfless missionary of Kanthala, a kindly, lonely man trying to do good work under most depressing circumstances Findlay's heart is heavy with despair, as he knows that he has failed as a missionary His intimacy with Hindus has made him 'half a vedantist' Hamar likes Findlay He is one of those rare men who remain always

companionable, even though they say little Findlay in his unselfishness and enthusiasm is unconscious of the misery of his wife and delicate daughter It is too late when the realization comes to him that the India he had served was a false deity a demon for whom he had flung away his jewel He is a beaten man with everything gone except the indomitable will that continued to serve

Life's radiancy life's peace and hope had vanished his skies and his earth were void of God Only—even though God had forsaken him still he was resolved to serve Him—well them if not Him his fellows By this religion he would cling to the last It might be that the light would return If not no matter He would get his job done for this is the religion of the English (p 287)

As a contrast to Hamar and Findlay Mr Thompson gives us two sympathetically drawn portraits of Neogy the District Magistrate and Jayananda the Sanyasi

Jayananda Sadhu once an ICS who had resigned under a cloud and had been an active politician during the tempestuous days of anti Partition agitation appears to be a modified portrait of Arabindo Ghose The Sadhu is proficient in Yoga Mr Thompson considers his retirement as something inhuman 'when men and women are dying by the million Jayananda intent on saving himself cannot save others and is different from those men who do their job The gospel of such men according to Mr Thompson is a hidden gospel from the Gentiles who never dream that there is any job for them to do The Sadhu tells Alden that the one thing Englishmen lack is the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ

And until you can show us your peace we will not believe in your victory It is not energy that proves holiness A child or mad dog can rush round and round (p 272)

In this criticism of Western restlessness through Jayananda Mr Thompson offers a criticism of Christianity and an explanation of its failure in India His ideal however is not Jayananda but Findlay and he hopes

that they also will be saved who 'do their job' and sacrifice themselves in so doing

If Alden is a critic of Hinduism and Indians, Jayananda is a critic of Christianity and the English. He tells Alden that what vexes the Indians most in the Englishman is

"Your nobly moral airs. The way you have persuaded yourself that the Empire is just a magnificent philanthropic institution, disinterestedly run for the sake of an ungrateful world. That's where *your* brag comes in. You don't brag about your poetry—or your men of science—or your martyrs—or any of the things that really exist." (p. 278)

In the sketch of Kamalakanta Neogy, the magistrate and collector of Vishnugram, Mr. Thompson gives a sympathetic picture of an Indian who, like Hamar, was doing his job. Neogy, according to Mr. Thompson, is an anachronism in the India of to-day. He was an Indian who was serving the British Raj, and serving it in the spirit of a generation that had vanished for ever, it was the ghost of an old sentiment that functioned through him. He longs to have been born a Roumanian or a Bulgar, or anyone except an Indian.

"We get the worst of both worlds," he says bitterly, to Hamar, "our own and that one of yours in which we serve" (p. 221).

In Neogy and the Commissioner Deogharia, Mr. Thompson exemplifies the difficulties and drawbacks of Indianization of the higher services. Neogy complains that he has to administer the affairs of a million people in the poorest and most ignorant district in Bengal.

"My God! what a job!" said Neogy. "My own people call me a traitor and work against me. And you Englishmen sneer and are jealous, and laugh at me!" And his voice rose almost to a shout—"for Commissioner you set over me the damnedest, vilest, oiliest, basest rascal that even India under British rule ever produced" (p. 146).¹

¹ The only other novelist who discusses the question of the participation of Indians in the administration of their country is Mrs. Penny. The

Neogy understands his English colleagues and is liked by them—what a contrast to the times when Kipling wrote *The Head of a District*! He has one weakness the love of making long speeches. But otherwise he does not talk much and has dignity sense of duty and efficiency. If he has an inferiority complex, he keeps it under control.

Nevertheless the ties that bound him to the alien empire that he served were looser and more flexible than those which had bound his father (p. 35)

Deogharia the Commissioner and the official chief of Neogy and Hamar is a sketch of a bad officer and a satire on Indianization. Hamar thinks that it is the duty of the English in India to protect Indians from bloodsuckers of their own race such as Deogharia and refuses to shake hands with him.

Mr. Thompson's book is full of acute and shrewd observations on Indians and Anglo Indian life. No one escapes his keen satire. Like his own Alden he is an enthusiast where the people of the land were concerned. He possesses Alden's irresponsible cheerfulness. His comment on the pride and exclusiveness of the civilian is trenchant. He speaks of the herd ethos that rules that hardworking and conscientious class the I.C.S. and knows that a *rapprochement* between the covenanted ruler of millions and a non official in a small *mofussil* station is like the companionship of a tiger and sambur and pig on

Richard point of view is expressed by Brian Fairbairn in *One of the Best*. He cannot believe that Indians can be as good as the English. Lady Weybridge regards the experiment of admitting Indians in place of

Indians not for the baboos of India but for the native princes who had been dispossessed in the past. The claims of the modern Brahman he held in contempt.

some lessening stretch of silt' during the floods There 'the forest lord' is tolerant, and even courteous

'Even so, in a small mofussil town, the I C S man is glad to tennis and dine and shoot with missionary or educationist or policeman or coolie-catcher But his preference is for flocks of his own kind, and when these are at hand, self-respecting outside acquaintances leave him to them' (pp 175-6)

He is fully conscious of the touchiness of Indians, as of the bad temper of the Englishman in the East Alden is made to quote a Bengali student who regarded a simple statement that the Ganges was a somewhat muddy stream as an 'insultation to our mother'

His criticism of the British attitude towards American tourists who, like Miss Mayo, race through India and write books on their experience, is outspoken Mr Thompson does not mince matters.

'And Hilda thought, Britain is restive about this Empire of hers, she does not care what her own people think, but she is anxious to conciliate—if necessary, to deceive—these spies who come from outside, especially if they come from that annoying, powerful, wealthy America that is so highly moral and meddling So instinctively, as well as from deliberate policy, the administration had gone out of its way and fed this woman with flattery as a prize cat is fed with cream She was now purring and happy, she was going back to America, she told Hilda, to tell her people that "these natives" were "vurry unreasonable" and there was "more real democracy" in the British Government of India than she had ever believed' (p 214)

Mr Thompson's book is full of such observations on men and manners His power of construction, even that of characterization, may appear to be laboured, but the charm of *An Indian Day* lies in the reaction of a cultured and artistic mind to India at a time of political and intellectual ferment

The scene and some of the characters of the story of Mr. Thompson's next book *A Farewell to India* (1931) are

the same as of *An Indian Day*. The plot interest is slighter and the excursions into Indian politics somewhat tire some. But as a record of the disillusionment of a missionary (partly autobiographical) who had devoted twenty years of his life to the service of India endeavouring to bring about a better understanding between England and India, of his sorrow at his failure and bitterness at the perverted scheme of things *A Farenell to India* is a very human book. Robin Alden is the principal character in the story. He has to face the consequences of political strikes and *hartals* among the students of his college at Vishnugram in the absence of Douglas on leave during the days of an imperious and reckless Nationalism jerking his students back and forth like puppets and is thoroughly disgusted both with the Indians and the English. Mr Thompson criticizes this phase of Indian nationalism. Alden is his mouthpiece. Dinabandhu Tarachuramani is a Bengal nationalist leader who looks on non violence as a private fad of Gandhi. He tolerates Gandhi because he is useful with the world outside especially with America. Alden regards Gandhi's non violence as just part of the whole foolery and thinks that Gandhi is living by instinct and passion and not by reason any longer.¹ Jayananda Sadhu does not think that there will be peace as long as the non violent humbug talks to the look what we have done for India humbug. Peace can only come when the unbragging India comes face to face with the unbragging England. His pen portrait of Gandhi a man who had ceased to be one of us, and had become an elemental being a gust blowing up from the earth a passion enclosed (and barely enclosed) in a wizened worn out body is striking. He does not care for Gandhi's economics which he considers twenty years or more out of date, or for his history 'grotesquely at variance with actuality' but in Gandhi he sees a man in whom centuries of poverty, and exploitation had found

a voice', a human need through whom 'suffering was speaking—not its own—but a nation's'

'The Spirit of God', so mused Alden when he heard Gandhi speak (and 'trembled as a skilled oarsman might when he first hears Niagara') 'has used this man, and has nearly done with him. He cannot last much longer. No human body could be the lamp of such a flame and persist. He has done his work and will be going. I can see a score of places where he has been wrong, and often woefully wrong. But I wish my people could have been his friends. I know he's wrong, yet I daren't say he's wrong' (p. 145)

Alden, who is considered by Indians as a sort of a genial madman who knows too much about them, is saved from actual madness by his sense of humour, his love for, and wanderings in, the jungles, and the loving care of his wife and sister-in-law. Too conscious of his failure, finding himself the 'loneliest man in all India', battered in health and shaken in soul, he bids farewell to India which had drawn him in all 'the eager hopefulness of his first manhood' and which was becoming now 'featureless and voiceless'.

As a psychological study of an individual, Robin Alden, *A Farewell to India* is a book of outstanding merit. The description of the *mela* of Lekteswar shows that Mr Thompson could have written a novel of real India had he not, like his own Alden, taken Indian politics 'too seriously'. Though a Christian he is impressed by the devotion of the women praying in the sanctuary of the 'Great God'

'It was not these ignorant women of the poorest and most backward district in Bengal who were praying. It was the procession of womankind through the ages. Watching the tense, excited faces, John and Robin saw the look that was once on St Theresa's and St Joan's faces. It was little that was asked of the Divine, and they were willing to pay all they had for it—they asked only fulfilment through pain and drudgery, and for another life to be the crown and fulfilment of their own' (p. 254)

INDIAN HISTORY IN ANGLO INDIAN FICTION

A VERY large amount of Anglo Indian fiction consists of books illustrating some phase of the history of India past or present. Most of these books have one characteristic in common: if they are good history they are bad novels and if they are good novels they are bad history. Most of them imitate Scott or Bulwer Lytton and have no higher aim than that of reproducing picturesque scenes or sensational incidents. In character drawing, both historical and imaginative they are poor.

60 *Buddhist period*

The story of Buddha and Buddhism has attracted several writers. Paul Carus in his story of Buddhist theology called *Amitabha* (1906) contrasts Buddhism with Brahmanism. *The Pilgrim Kamanita A Legendary Romance* (1911) by Karl Adolf Gjellerup translated by J. E. Logie is a story of the last days of the Buddha and gives a moving description of his death.¹ The latest writer to be attracted by the charm of the Buddha and his teachings is Mrs. L. Adams Beck. Her *Splendour of Asia* like Sir Edwin Arnold's *Light of Asia* is a tribute to one of the greatest teachers of the world. Paul Morand in *The Living Buddha* imagines the Buddha as living in the modern atmosphere of Paris and New York and attempts to show how he would react to his new surroundings. It is remarkable that these great romances should have been written by men of nationalities other than English. The pale purity of the founder of Buddhism and his doctrines of Nirvana do not seem to appeal to the large mass of patrons of English fiction.

¹ *Baker Guide*

61 *Hindu period.*

The Hindu period of Indian history, as also the Pathan period, has been left almost untouched by story-tellers. It was only in 1930 that Mr Panchapakesa Ayyar, of the Indian Civil Service, published his historical romance of Ancient India, *Baladitya*. The novel treats of the overthrow of Kanishka's Empire by the Huns, who succumbed to the influence of Hindu culture and civilization and became the progenitors of the Rajputs. Mr Ayyar has tried to picture a distant past. His descriptions are occasionally vivid, and show considerable reading and industry. The characters, however, are puppets, and given to preaching. The book has a definite purpose: to pay homage to long-forgotten heroes like Baladitya and Yasodharman, and to prepare Indians against the 'next horde of barbarians who may invade India in the future'. Sir Hugh Clifford in *The Downfall of the Gods* (1911) describes the overthrow of the Khmer Empire of Cambodia in the thirteenth century, but his book is Eastern, not Indian. The Pathan period still awaits its novelist.

62 *Moghul period*

It is to the Moghul period and to the subsequent history of the English conquest of India that the majority of the historical novels relate. The splendour of the Moghul empire, its romance, and its glamour have been reproduced in several novels of repute. Mrs Flora Annie Steel in *King-Errant* (1912), *A Prince of Dreamers* (1908), *Mistress of Men* and *The Builder* (1928), deals with the reigns of the four great Moghul Emperors of India. What Mrs Steel says in her preface to *King-Errant* is true of all these novels. 'This is not a novel, neither is it history.' These novels are romanticized biographies. In *King-Errant*, Mrs Steel describes the life of Babar, 'the first of the dynasty which we misname the Great Moghuls'. She has tried her best to present

without flaw the lovable versatile volatile soul which wrote down its virtues and its vices its successes and its failures with equally unsparing truth, and equally invariable sense of honour and humour (Preface)

She has only added the incident of the crystal bowl and the details of Babar's subsequent marriage to Mahim. Mrs Steel styles herself a most ardent admirer of Babar 'who had won half Hindustan', not so much by the sword as by statesmanship. *A Prince of Dreamers* is in the same manner an exhaustive study of Akbar and his dreams of the regeneration of the world and of creating a united happy prosperous India. Mrs Steel succeeds remarkably in portraying the varied life of the period in a realistic manner and in analysing the mystic side of Akbar's work and ideals. *Mistress of Men* presents Jahangir 'the compleat lover' a moving human story founded on historical facts. *The Builder* a story of Shahjahan the Magnificent completes the record of four of the great emperors of India. Mrs Steel uses history as a background as a gorgeous stage in *The Builder*. The central incident of the story is the great love which is embodied in the Taj. She has reproduced the picture of the desolate soul of the bereaved king with skill and art in the manner of Mrs L. Adams Beck. It is the humanity of the great Moghul emperors that Mrs Steel emphasizes in these romances. The biographies of these kings are in themselves romances and Mrs Steel's merit lies in a sympathetic understanding of men and manners in the selection of salient events and the skill and imagination with which they have been reproduced.

The Near and the Far (1929) by Mr L. H. Myers is an extraordinary book of the time of Akbar. The author says in his preface that it is not an historical novel nor is it an attempt to portray specifically oriental modes of living and thinking. He is frank in admitting that he has done what he liked with history and geography and has

distorted or ignored facts when they were inconvenient. In spite of this, *The Near and the Far* succeeds in reproducing the atmosphere of the time of Akbar in an exquisite manner, more successfully at any rate than the dry textbooks of history. Mr Myers has caught the spirit of the age, and tried to lay bare the soul of the Great Emperor who attempted to reconcile the conflict of creeds by founding a universal church. His skill in drawing character is seen not only in the delineation of Akbar, his two sons, and Sheikh Mobarek, Akbar's spiritual adviser, but also in the portraits of fictitious characters: the Buddhist Rajah Amar who is weary of the world; Hari Khan (an impossible name), his brother-in-law, who is a follower of Omar Khayyam in his lamentations over the evanescent nature of human bliss, the charming Sita, the Rajah's Christian wife, and the disillusioned Gokal whose objects of longing and despair were 'the beauty of nature in its mindlessness, the beauty of instinct in its thoughtlessness, the beauty of youth in its ignorance' ¹ Gokal, like all other characters, is given to introspection, after an age-long search Gokal reaches the following conclusion

'It is better to laugh and weep like a child than to follow the wisdom of the wisest' (p. 74)

Incidents are skilfully intertwined with characters, Hari Khan's passionate love affair with Princess Lalita incidentally introduces us to the strange sect of Vamacharis. The book is not complete in itself and the author promises a sequel ² But as it is, it is one of the cleverest of Indian historical novels, written in an easy, chaste, and smooth-

¹ p. 75

² Its publication is announced now, under the title *Prince Jali*. The essence of it is the drama in a boy's mind, as he discovers the circumstances of his world and reacts to them. Jali is a little precocious. Gunewati's fate is gruesome. On the whole, though it is more concentrated in feeling, *Prince Jali* seems an advance on its predecessor. Mr Myers is a novelist whose interest in ideas does not impair his interest in people. (This note is based on *The Times Literary Supplement*)

flowing style. The author is successful in proving that the thoughts, feelings and aspirations of the people in the time of Akbar are the thoughts, feelings and aspirations of all times, and what may seem so far and distant is, in spite of the differences of environment and time, after all very near.

Mr. Romesh Chandra Dutt in *The Slave Girl of Agra* (1909) gives a picture of the dark palace intrigues of the Moghul period in general, or of the dramas of human love and hatred that were enacted then behind the scenes. It is a translation of his Bengali novel *Madhabī Kankan*. The book describes social life in the sixteenth century and the beginning of the seventeenth century. Mr. Dutt wrote several other historical novels of the Moghul period in Bengali, not all of which have been translated into English. Mr. R. Krishna in his romance *Padmīnī* (1903) gathers romantic facts into a story relating to the defeat of the Hindus at Talikota in 1565, leading to the disruption of the great empire of Vijayanagar. The rise and fall of the great city of Vijayanagar forms the subject of Ena Fitzgerald's novel *Patcola: A Tale of a Dead City* (1908). Meadows Taylor in *A Noble Queen* (1878) uses the romance that surrounds the name of the Queen of Ahmednagar, who is respected as the preserver of Beejapur, and especially for the heroic resistance she offered to the Moghul armies of Akbar. Mr. Louis Tracy, in *Heart's Delight* (1907) introduces us to the court of Jehangir and to Sir Thomas Roe.

63 *Seventeenth century: Aurangzeb and Shivaji*

Omitting Mr. Michael Macmillan's juvenile book *In Wild Mahratta Battle* (1905), the only novel of importance introducing Shivaji's *Tara* by Meadows Taylor. This book describes the victories of the Mahrattas under Shivaji over the armies of Beejapur. The manners, customs and the turbulent state of the land in those days are faithfully reproduced. The historical portion follows the

accepted accounts of the period King Adil Shah of Beejapur, distracted by the threatened attacks of Emperor Alamgir on the one hand, and depredations of Shivaji on the other (his own minister and Kotwal being in league with the enemy), is depicted as a brave, just, and merciful king Afzul Khan, his general, is a brave, chivalrous, and devoted knight The life of Shivaji in his mountain fastnesses, his fondness for religious plays and *Kutbas*, his worship of the goddess Bhawani, his craftiness and his courage, and especially the influence that his mother exercised on him, and how he loved and respected her, are described in a number of chapters full of vivid, dramatic scenes The murder of Afzul Khan by Shivaji and the rout of Afzul Khan's army are remarkable examples of dramatization of history Meadows Taylor has not much respect for Mahrattas In Shivaji himself, and in Tannajee Moolsrav and Moro Trimmul he lays stress on the craftiness and crookedness of Mahratta politics and character He draws a vivid portrait of the great Mahratta leader who was looked upon with feelings of respect and love mingled with awe, even as an 'incarnation of divinity', by his followers.

'Seated as he was amidst a crowd of friends and attendants, the Mahratta Rajah seemed, in the distance, almost contemptible, from his small stature and plain insignificant appearance Dressed in ordinary white muslin, the only ornament he wore was the "Jika" or jewel for the turban, which sparkled with valuable diamonds A light red shawl drawn over his shoulders protected him from the somewhat chill wind, and before him lay his terrible sword Bhawani, and the large black shield of rhinoceros hide which he usually wore A nearer view, however, gave a different impression Somewhat dark in complexion, with a prominent nose broad in the nostril, large soft eyes, small determined mouth and chin, a thin moustache curled up at the ends, and bushy black whiskers shaved on a line with his ear—formed a countenance at once handsome and intelligent, while his slight figure, apparently more active than strong, evinced by its little movement even

while sitting a power of endurance which was confirmed by the expression of his face (p 409)

64 *East India Company*

Miss Hilda Gregg or as she is known better Sydney C Grier a writer who has romanticized the history of British India in a series of historical novels, gives us a glimpse of the life in English settlements on the west coast in the latter half of the seventeenth century or during the reign of Aurangzeb in *In Furthest Ind the Narrative of Mr Edward Carlyon of the H E I C's Service* (1899) She describes the life of Englishmen at Surat and then takes the reader to Goa to show him the Inquisition at work *auto da fe* and the ceremonies connected therewith These European settlements lived in fear of Mahrattas inroads under Seva Gi But Edward Carlyon recognizes at the same time that Seva Gi was

In truth the only man that in this strait could avail to protect us against the Moghuls (p 247)

Seva Gi's courtesy and hospitality to stranded Europeans are acknowledged

So courteously did the barbarian carry himself towards us that while we tarried with him he appointed a butcher for our sole service and had him slay a goat for us every day since the Gentues eat no flesh meat but he knowing that we Europeans were accustomed thereto would not suffer us to miss it And on our departing he did give us many gifts yes even to our servants and cooleys (p 265)

Aurangzeb's portrait is of interest

A man beyond middle age very gray and reverend of
His habit consorted
e satin very delicate
out his middle His
turban was of gold cloth with a string of great pearls woven
therein and a plume set with very fine diamonds in the fore
front thereof (p 220)

Mr. Frank R. Sell has written a romantic novel, *Bhim Singh* (1929), which relates to the same period. It is a charming story of Rajput chivalry and romance in the spirit of Tod's *Rajasthan*. It deals with the discomfiture of Aurangzeb in the battle of Berach. The author has kept fairly close to history, and where he invents episodes, they are framed to show Rajput ideas of sport, love, honour, and war. Bhim Singh is an ideal Rajput Prince, loving Princess Ambalika and loved by the heroic Premabai, the daughter of Thakur Gopinath of Ghanerao. The book opens with the description of the festival of Ahairea. Princess Ambalika is an exquisitely proportioned doll. But Premabai is more representative of the brave and beautiful Rajput maidens who in intelligence, patriotism, and valour have rivalled their men. Her silent love for Prince Bhim Singh lends a note of pathos to the story. Aurangzeb's character is one-sided. He appears as the familiar idol-smashing fanatic. Mr. Sell, however, pays a tribute to the Emperor's intelligence and shrewdness. The skill with which he outmanœuvres Prince Akbar and saves himself and his throne wins praise even from his adversaries. Mr. Sell's knowledge of Mewar, and especially of Udaipur, is accurate and his descriptions picturesque. With the exception of Miss Hilda Gregg mentioned before, the only other novelist who has woven a romance about the early history of the East India Company is Mrs. F. E. Penny. *Diamonds* (1920), her only historical romance, relates to the end of the seventeenth century when the Company was still a trading body. She describes the 'free-traders' (who refused to recognize the Company's monopoly) and Portuguese and Dutch competitors, she sketches E. Yale, President of the settlement at Fort St. George, which she knows thoroughly. The work is well done, but Mrs. Penny seems to be lacking in historical imagination. Her past looks like the present. As a writer of contemporary India, however, she has a recognized position in Anglo-Indian literature. *Dia-*

monds shows her usual characteristics her sober style and gift of painting types but it does not add much to her reputation

As may naturally be expected, a very large number of Anglo Indian historical novels are based on incidents of the British conquest of India. Several novels centre round the career of Clive and describe the events leading up to the battle of Plassey. Most of these novels are juvenile in character. In most of them a young scapegrace is made to win honour and wealth in the campaigns of Clive. The Black Hole incident is described in all its horror in several novels and the character of Siraj ud Dowla painted in dark colours. Miss Gregg's novel *Like Another Helen* (1899) is superior to ordinary stories for boys. In this book she vividly describes the capture of Calcutta and the battle of Plassey. Many historical personages are introduced with success and praise and blame duly meted out. The book is written in the form of letters relating the adventures of Sylvia Irene. The language and style are old and the way in which incidents and characters are painted produce the impression that one is reading a contemporary document. *Ralph Darnell* by Meadows Taylor deals with the same period.

Miss Gregg's third novel *The Great Proconsul* (1904), takes us to the times of Warren Hastings. It is written in the form of memoirs of a lady belonging to the household of Warren Hastings. The book gives an account of the revolt at Benares, the Mahratta and the Carnatic Wars and the dissensions in the Council of the Governor General. The character of Warren Hastings is painted with sympathy and skill, and full justice done to the great qualities that have made him one of the heroes of British history. His love for his wife, his tact, his diplomacy, his gentleness are all depicted with force. The book is a remarkable picture of the life at the close of the eighteenth century. Lady Impey, her jealousy of

Coote, Lady Anne Monson—'the life of the concerts and card parties'—and a granddaughter of Charles II are brought back to live again in the pages of this novel.

Another interesting book relating to this period is *Warren of Oudh* (1926) by Mr Richard B. Gamon, who has attempted to give in this novel an account of the life of the 'Settlement' of Fort William during the time of Warren Hastings and of the court and camp of Asaf-ud-Dowla, Nawab of Oudh. The struggles between the English and the French are typified in the persons of Warren of Oudh and Chevalier-Isidore Boleslas Duselin, who are rivals in their love for Miss Brunel. The book is valuable not so much for its story of love and adventure as for the light that it throws on those times. Mr Gamon has succeeded in capturing the atmosphere of this picturesque period and has reproduced it creditably, barring a few minor slips here and there. We find Europeans using 'snuff-horns', hair-powders, moving about in phaetons, whiskeys and sedan-like *bocha* palanqueens, attended by 'coffrees' or African slaves, smoking huqqas with amber mouth-pieces, playing a game of quad, tredille, or forming a 'partie at picquet', not disdaining moorish food-stuffs, *atta*, *gram*, rice and *dhali* and eating chupattis and 'fry rice into *murri*'. The following extract describes the political condition of Bengal.

'The [Sountal] raid takes place months ago. The harassed villagers appeal to their headman. He seeks the aid of some one in authority—an ease-loving *Zemindar*, a pot-bellied potentate of this Subah. This cove lends a gracious ear and writes out a *chit* asking the Nabob for assistance and reparation. Nabob writes another *chit* to the Kumpani Bhadur and forgets all about it because of a new doxie or something. The urgent appeal finally reaches us [English] when it is recalled to his Excellency's amiable recollection by some chance circumstance and the Sountals have packed up and gone home. Ever the way of the Gentoo' (pp 39-40)

In order to get to the 'continent' from the Settlement

borders, a ferry was necessary ¹ The travellers had to keep an open eye for thugs A feringhi was such an unknown being that he was taken for 'a great lord if not an incarnation of Vishnu' ² Criminals were caged and rattaned ³ We have also a glimpse of Asaf ud Dowlah and his court The Nawab is described as a young man about twenty seven years of age, with a fair skin and pleasant cast of countenance He had a small moustache and deep brown eyes which shone honestly and frankly enough He wore a caftan of green velvet and a turban of muslin in which an egret plume was fastened by an emerald studded clasp ⁴

65 *Begum Somru*

A few novels centre round the romance of Begum Somru, so called because she was the widow of Walter Reindhart nicknamed *Sombre* Walter Reindhart was one of the unprincipled free lances who took service under the various contending chiefs during the last fifty years of the eighteenth century Lieutenant General G F MacMunn who has recently published his history of the Mutiny opens his book *A Free Lance in Kashmir* (1915) with an account of the *campo* of Begum Somru and describes very vividly the state of anarchy that prevailed in her army David Fraser, the son of a major in the army of the East India Company and of Sultana Aluri Suddozai who could not obtain service under the Company on account of his birth agrees to carry a message of the Begum to Salabat Khan, the Durrani Governor of Kashmir His adventures in Kashmir arising out of his physical resemblance to the Governor and Miriam's love for him and their marriage take up the rest of the volume The sketch of Azizun the dancer and of Père Jean Armande St Hilaire du Plessis of the Society of Jesus are good General MacMunn's knowledge of military dispositions

¹ p 83

² p 84

³ p 96

⁴ p 119

⁵ p 140

and military tactics is shown to advantage in this book. Two other books, *The Foreigner* (1928) by Mrs G H Bell, and *Quest and Conquest* (1929), by Mr V E Bannisdale, introduce George Thomas, the *Jehazi Sahib*, and describe his relations with Begum Somru. George Thomas was a Tipperary peasant, illiterate and intelligent, unscrupulous, kindly, courageous, and full of ambition, who sold his services to Indian princes and French adventurers. The novels give a vivid account of the days of the 'great anarchy', when French and English soldiers of fortune of questionable repute fought for the control of Indian states—and of their rulers, armies, and revenue. The character of Begum Somru, her greed, passion, and cruelty, as well as her administrative powers, are skilfully portrayed. Mrs. Bell thus describes the Begum

'The Begum was India herself the mystery, the attraction, the melancholy, the sense of endless echo, the pulse of passion, were hers. No longer girlish, but in the full tide of feminine maturity, she was handsome as a tree is handsome, strong, deep-rooted, majestic. She was a wheat-coloured woman, and the dark sari she wore made a moon-shaped thing of her low brow. Her eyes were blackened with kohl and her fine aquiline nose asserted itself as against the soft ripe beauty of her lips. There was nothing meagre about the Begum's figure, which was bundled up dolefully in a heavy embroidered Bokhara shawl. She wore trousers and a kurta and embroidered turned-up shoes' (p. 36)

As an exercise of the imaginative faculty this portrait is wonderful, but it is doubtful if Mohammedan begums at the end of the eighteenth century wore *saris*. It is interesting to compare this portrait with that given by Mr Bannisdale in *Quest and Conquest*

'Female attendants now appeared and drew back the curtains of the litter. Inside it, propped with innumerable cushions, sat a fat native woman in a tumbled sari, worn over baggy trousers, with a much stained brown persian shawl thrown over her head and shoulders, revealing a few oily locks escaping from under a tinsel cap. Her complexion was pale for one

of her race and sallow and her hooked nose and small piercing black eyes gave her the appearance of an overfed hawk (p 95)

Mrs Bell introduces us to the blind Emperor Shah Alam. Though his throne and harem had been dishonoured he did not strike any manly blow to defend either or regain either. He is represented as wearing

a prim green coat with a Persian shawl pattern woven into it and a headgear like a skittish nightcap adorned by a tiara (p 101)

Mrs Bell's volume is full of local colour and many historical events and personages. Mr Bannisdale's book is simpler. In other respects he and Mrs Bell work on the same plan. Both introduce George Thomas as a handsome stalwart adventurer who wins the heart of the Begum but

Mrs Bell makes him a man
 wife
 of an officer of the East India Company while Mr Bannisdale depicts the hardships of Maria Lestineau an Irish girl of a respectable family with whom he was in love before he came out to India. According to both he was married to a Mohammedan slave of the Begum. Both introduce Appa both refer to the Begum's quarrel with Le Vassoult her attempted suicide and Le Vassoult's death on hearing the rumour of the Begum's death. Both relate the incident of her being made a prisoner by her cruel son Balthasar Somru or Zaffer Yab Khan of her being chained to a gun for seven days and her rescue by George Thomas. There is not merely similarity of plan in the case of the two writers but sometimes even similarity of language. The significance of their publications at this time is made clear by Mrs Bell's Preface and Mr Bannisdale's Dedication.

Like the Battle of Plassey, the Mysore wars with Hyder Ali and Tippoo Sultan are described in many novels. Scott's *The Surgeon's Daughter* and Meadows Taylor's *Tippoo Sultan* have been mentioned before. G. A. Henty

in *The Tiger of Mysore* (1895) and J Percy Groves in *The Duke's Own* (1887) write stories for boys dealing with the siege of Seringapatam

66 *Wars in the nineteenth century*

Most of the books dealing with Mahiatta life and Mahratta wars, with the exception of W. B Hockley's *Pandurang Hari*, are meant for young readers. They are based on the current histories of the period but show imperfect knowledge of local conditions. F P Gibbon in *The Prisoner of the Gurkhas* (1903) describes the adventures of an Ensign in Ochterlony's campaign against the Gurkhas. G A Henty's *On the Irrawaddy* narrates the adventures of Stanley Brooks in the Burmese campaign of Sir Archibald Campbell. Miss Maud Diver's book, *The Hero of Herat* (1912), is a tribute to Eldred Pottinger, the brave defender of Herat, and is more of biography than fiction. Mr Herbert Hayens in *Clevely Sahib* (1896) and Miss G A Henty in *To Herat and Kabul* (1901) deal with the same period in their usual manner. Mr H M Wallis 'embodies an authentic story of Lord Gough's Sikh Campaign'¹ in *An Old Score* (1906). Miss Hilda Gregg's Frontier romances, *The Path to Honour* (1909), its sequel *The Keepers of the Gate* (1911), and the *Advanced Guard* (1903), are much inferior to her previous books. Actual facts of history are mixed with stories of love and war, but the knowledge of Indian life displayed is in many places far from accurate. For example, Rajah Partap Singh and his little son, Kharak Singh, who pay a visit to Gerrard, are offered the hookah kept for occasions of this sort! No Indian would dream of insulting a Sikh guest, whether distinguished or not, by the offer of a hookah. We are told that

'Gerrard took a whiff himself, then passed the mouthpiece to his guests—but it was politely refused with a sanctimonious glance at the servants' (p 31)

¹ Baker, *Guide to Historical Fiction*, p 408

It appears that Gerrard and his friend Charteris would have annexed empires with the utmost ease. But they were mere ensigns and could not act without orders. *The Warden of the Marches* (1901) is a story in defence of the forward policy on the Frontier. Miss Hilda Gregg is at home in dealing with English characters.

An interesting and finely drawn picture of military and official life of the Panjab after its annexation having for its theme the struggle between a strong Commander in Chief and an equally strong Governor General is given by Miss Gregg in *Two Strong Men* (1923). The sketch of Sir Henry Lennox obstinate, self opinionated contemptuous of civilians and politicals outspokenly and indiscreetly critical of the methods of others yet an excellent soldier and administrator and a warm hearted lovable man¹ is well drawn. He has the strength of purpose of those great soldiers who have made the British Empire what it is. His anxiety for the better housing and better treatment of the British soldier in India is genuine.

No miss says he to his daughter Sally. I have the health of my brave soldiers to think of. Leave it to the Board they know the country and understand what they re about says poor silly Blairgowrie but they don't. They know nothing about the amount of air a European soldier needs in this climate and they care less than nothing about the poor fellow's hot weather misery—cooped up all day in a barrack room with no more than space for his bed and nothing to do but stupefy himself with vile intoxicants till he goes mad or dies a ruined wreck! I'll rescue our men before I talk about going home. (p. 91)

Miss Sally her father's favourite is also powerfully drawn. Her love for Major Delany and their private marriage supply the love interest to the book. The scene when the bed ridden Delany makes Sally herself write a letter to his little ward Miss Wilcrick his supposed fiancée is conceived in a spirit of delightful humour. The book is not a novel of incident. It moves on in a series of vivid

¹ *The Times Literary Supplement*

dialogues usually between Sir Henry and one or other of the characters of the story. The dialogues have a tendency to become monotonous. There is something of Miss Gregg's old power in this book, but her first three novels are distinctly superior to her later works.

67 *Novels of the Indian Mutiny*

A large number of Anglo-Indian novels are concerned with the Mutiny. The Mutiny was full of acts of individual heroism. To the heroes of history, the novelists have added a large number of heroes of fiction.

The earliest novel in which the Mutiny is mentioned is *The Wife and the Ward, or, A Life's Error* (1859), later on published as *A Woman's Fortitude—A Tale of Cannypore*. It introduces the Nana Sahib. *The Dilemma, A Tale of the Mutiny* by Sir George Tomkyns Chesney is the first full-fledged novel of the Mutiny. Neither *The Wife and the Ward* nor *Seeta* treats the Mutiny as the basis of its plot. Sir George Tomkyns Chesney's book is particularly interesting, as he himself took part in the Mutiny. It describes in some detail and with the knowledge of an expert how a band of Englishmen defended a small *mofussil* station, Mustaphabad. Colonel Falkland is the hero of the story and sums up in his person all the heroism, terror, and tragedy of the Mutiny. A soul of honour during peace, a hero during war, he is left a shapeless, mutilated man, with a face so disfigured that he himself is horrified at his appearance. He now realizes that Fate has cut him off from all that made life dear. It would have been a great novel but for the last part which does not fit in with the rest. Falkland's desire to see Olivia is natural, and Olivia is a beautiful creature true to life. But the author in his desire to make the novel interesting has made it unnecessarily sensational. Falkland's return to England after having been taken for dead (like another Enoch Arden) is foolish. The scenes of fire and madness are too melodramatic. The love-

interest of the story is cleverly kept up but it is unnecessary and Olivia's marriage to Kirke spoils the unity of the plot. Arthur Yorke is no better than the conventional character of fiction—all heroism nobility and self-sacrifice and in love with a woman who does not care for him. Mrs Polwheedle however is an interesting Anglo Indian a type of womanhood immortalized by Kipling. The love story and Mrs Polwheedle remind one of *The Wife and the Ward*. In 1873 Colonel Meadows Taylor published *Seeta* in which the Mutiny is used as a background. The figure of Azrael Pande is well drawn and he moves from place to place like Fate itself. The more horrible aspects of the Mutiny are not introduced. The attempts of the mutineers to win over the ruling chiefs to their cause are interesting. In a chapter entitled *The Mission of Azrael Pande* Taylor shows how weak nawabs like Dil Khan Bahadur of Pattapur and wavering rajahs were prevailed upon to range themselves against the English.

The plot of Mr D H Thomas's novel *The Touchstone of Peril A Tale of the Indian Mutiny* (1887 second edition) is laid in an indigo factory in the Upper Provinces. The planter's dwelling house is a Mohammedan mausoleum, converted into a bungalow. The planter Mr Neale and his wife are waiting for the arrival of their daughters Mary and Chloe Neale. The life story of the two charming girls is developed in the book with the storm of the Mutiny raging round them. The two characters are effectively contrasted. Other women characters are also admirably portrayed. Mrs Neale a woman of sterling character the Collector who elects to die at his post rather than find safety in flight. Mrs Graham the heathen Burmese widow of a Scotch sergeant are true to nature. In Colonel Peter Monk we have a portrait of the old type of Company's officer.

He was an Anglo Indian pure and simple. All his sympathies, all his knowledge all his family traditions were

connected with India Hindustani had been his infant language, he had gone to England at the age of twelve, had shivered through four summers and three winters, had come away rejoicing, and had never gone back again His grandmother was a native of India, but his own mother having been a full-blooded Scotchwoman, most of the traces of the cross had been obliterated Notwithstanding all this, or because of it, what Peter Monk prided himself on most was that he was an Englishman . But his deepest sympathies were really with India and its people His intercourse with the natives had not been of that purely formal and enforced character it is in the case of most Englishmen of position, but of a really friendly character He spoke the language like themselves, knew its turns of speech, he knew their mode of thought, or rather had a similar one, he knew their forms of politeness He had married a native lady of good family In his younger days he had fought many a main of cocks with the Nuwab of Lucknow and the young princes of Delhi He took a genuine personal interest in the sports and pastimes of his men He not only respected the caste prejudices of the natives, but shared them' (p 16)

Mr. Thomas also draws an interesting portrait of Zulfikar Ali Khan, once the head of a wealthy Mohammedan family, 'a whilom roué, turned devotee and bigot, an erstwhile Delhi courtier become a rebel head centre'. The value of Mr Thomas's book lies as much in the insight that it affords into the lights and shades of Indian and English character as in his faithful picture of the supreme crisis in the history of the British Empire in the East¹

The Afghan Knife (1879), a three-volume novel by Robert Armitage Sterndale, *The Peril of the Sword* (1903) by Colonel A F P Harcourt, *The Devil's Wind* by Patricia Wentworth (Mrs G F Dillon), *Red Year* (1908) by Louis Tracy, and *Red Revenge* (1911) by Charles E Pearce, mainly deal with Cawnpore massacres

In *The Afghan Knife* two historical persons are introduced, Syed Hyder Ali who is meant for Azimullah Khan,

¹ *Calcutta Review*, 1887

Devil's Wind—a notable piece of work—not only do we see Azimullah Khan as the vakil of the Nana Sahib in England the idol of the season but Tantia Topi Bal Sahib and the Nana Sahib of Bittoor himself This is how the Nana Sahib is described

In one of the chairs sat a very stout man dressed all in white His thin muslin shirt was fastened at the neck by a great red jewel but it opened below exposing two hands breadth of the fat unwholesome flesh upon his chest His small white turban was almost entirely covered with gold lace, and a thick gold chain hung down into his lap Between the gold lace and the gold chain his face had a yellowish look for the skin was fair and tightly stretched across the fat cheeks and heavy sensual chin He was clean shaven and there were lines about the mouth and eyes which should not have been on any human face but in spite of these the general effect was one of good natured self indulgence Emerald peacocks perched upon golden pinnacles ornamented the hookah from which he smoked and as he smoked his eyes went to and fro continually and showed a bloodshot rim (p 179)

The love story of Richard Morton married to the flighty Adela and loving Helen Wilmot is a crude and sensational variation of *The Wife and the Ward* Mrs Crowther reminds one of Mrs Polwheele Mr Louis Tracy gives a popular and vivid account of the tragedy of Cawnpore and the Siege of Lucknow In addition to the famous Englishmen of history and Emperor Bahadur Shah he has introduced the Emperor's daughter Roshanara Begum The events of the Mutiny are related with ghastly realism The adventures of Major Malcolm and his servant Chumru and their hairbreadth escapes make sensational reading According to the author, the work is more a history than a romance Mr Charles E Pearce has added another book in which like Mr Tracy he relates the horrors and crimes of the Nana Sahib and his associates

Among novels relating to the siege and relief of Lucknow may be mentioned *With Sword and Pen a story of India in the Fifties* (1904), by H C Irwin. The author describes the events leading to the annexation of Oudh, life in a native court, and the relief of Lucknow—a simple story of adventure with plenty of go in it. *Love Besieged, A Romance of the Residency of Lucknow*, is another story by the same author in which he carefully follows historical events.

Many novels of the Mutiny describe the siege of Delhi, the general condition of the country before the outbreak of the Mutiny, and the causes that led to it. The interest of Major J. N H Maclean's book *Rane* (1887), a legend of the Mutiny, is due to the fact that he was actually a witness of the events he describes, and took an active part in many of the tragic scenes he depicts.¹ Mr R E Forrest has written two books dealing with the Mutiny, *Eight Days* (1891) and *Sword of Asrael* (1903). The latter describes the adventures of an officer who escaped from the revolted sepoys. Colonel Harcourt relates the adventures of an Englishwoman in the besieged city of Delhi in *Jenetha's Venture* (1899) and introduces several historical characters, Hodson, Nicholson, Montgomery, and Rajab Singh, Hodson's spy 'Maxwell Gray' (Mary G Tuttiott) uses the Mutiny as the main plot of her story *In the Heart of the Storm* (1891). Incidentally questions like those of women's rights are discussed in this book.

68 *Siege of Delhi, and Mrs Steel*

The most important book dealing with the siege of Delhi, and a comprehensive novel of the Mutiny is *On the Face of the Waters* (1896) by Mrs F A Steel. In her autobiography, Mrs. Steel tells us that this book occupied her thoughts for many long years—'in a way ever since I came out to India'. She tells us that she rewrote the fifth chapter 'fourteen separate times'.² To collect infor-

¹ *Calcutta Review*, 1908

² *The Garden of Fidelity*, p 198

mation for her book she returned to India in 1894. In Bombay she saw Violet Nicholson otherwise Laurence Hope. With the permission of the Panjab Government she inspected confidential papers relating to the subject preserved in the Delhi Offices. She found many of the records so interesting that she implored the Government to place them in some museum. There were tiny notes in quills, one in a chupatti, and confidential reports from all quarters. She worked at them literally day and night and learnt much that was absolutely new. At Kasur she steeped herself in the habits and thoughts of the common folk. At Delhi she learnt Court ways and the more civilized life of a big city. She used to prowl about the alleys and bazaars and would miss no opportunity of visiting good families especially those who claimed descent from the royal Moghul Dynasty. She tells us that there were about three hundred and fifty pensioners all claiming blood relationship with the Great Moghul. They were mostly helpless women whose pensions averaged from five to ten rupees a month and who supported themselves by *kalabutoon* or the manufacture of gold thread. Mrs. Steel was anxious to gain information especially on one subject, Major Hodson's capture of the Moghul Princes in Humayun's Tomb. She tells us that she succeeded at last in getting the testimony of an eye witness of considerable authority and that she adhered to that account.¹

It is thus that Mrs. Steel wrote her romance *On the Face of the Waters* and it is therefore not surprising that the historical portion of the work is punctiliously accurate. In her preface she says that even the account of the sham court at Delhi is pure history and the picturesque group of schemers and dupes—all of whom have passed to their account—did not need a single touch of fancy in its presentment. This is the best criticism of the book. The historical and the imaginative parts, however, are

not well harmonized. In a great historical novel, imagination not only re-creates the past, but makes the dry facts of history glow with life. Separation of fact and fiction into two water-tight compartments is impossible. The best parts of the book are those in which the past has been imaginatively re-created—the auction of the deposed King of Oudh's property, Jim Douglas's (or 'James Greyman's') romance with Zora-bibi and the description of the now almost extinct tribe of the many-faced Bunjara, Jhungi-Bhungi or Siddhu Tiddu. The event immediately preceding the Mutiny, i.e., the sentencing of eighty-five soldiers of the 3rd Bengal Cavalry to ten years' penal servitude for refusing to put up with the insult to their religion, and its effect on the troops and the people, the tactlessness of Carmichael Smyth and the helpless anger of the wise Craig, are vividly painted. The house of Gulanari in the Thundi Bazaar, the meetings of Princess Farkhoonda Zamani or Newasi and Abul-Bukr, the air of mystery, the vague rumours and the threatening atmosphere of an impending disaster before the morning of May 10, 1857, are described with imagination. Throughout the story the love-interest has been sustained. The relations of Jim Douglas with Kate Erlton and Tara constitute the fictitious as distinguished from the historical portion of the book. Tara who again and again declares her resolve to become suttee, lives upon the few crumbs of love that Jim Douglas throws to her. The Emperor Bahadur Shah is the pantaloons of history, thinking more of his poetry than his crown. He is as soft clay in the hands of his Shia Queen, Zeenut Mahl. Mrs Steel's account of historical events and persons does not materially differ from the account of well-known historians. The murder of the Moghul Princes she condemns as wanton and ruthless. She adds to the pathos of the tragedy by describing how Princess Farkhoonda Zamani died in her *rutb*, crying for Abul, being unable to bear the shock.

All accounts of the Mutiny must be sad. The extinction of a great empire and its leaders, however inefficient, is never a cheerful event.

Men are we and must grieve when even the Shade
Of that which once was great is passed away

(Wordsworth)

Mrs. Steel's account of the fall of Delhi evokes grief, and we say this as a compliment to Mrs. Steel's art. As an example of the emotive prose of Mrs. Steel the following description of the Ridge at Delhi may be quoted.

The Ridge itself was not unlike some huge spiny saurian basking in the sunlight, its tail in the river, its wider flatter head crowned by Hindoo Rao's house, resting on the groves and gardens of the Subz-mundi or Green Market, a suburb to the west of the town. It is a quaint fanciful spot, this Delhi Ridge even without the history of heroism crystallized into its very dust—a red dust which might almost have been stained by blood—a dust which matches that history, since it is formed of isolated atoms of rock, glittering perfect in themselves like the isolated deeds which went to make up the finest record of pluck and perseverance the world is ever likely to see. (p. 106)

There are several other novels of the Mutiny. These belong to the class of fiction called Juvenile. Of this nature are *In Times of Peril* (1883) by G. A. Henty, *For the Old Flag* (1899) by C. R. Fenn, *Terrible Times* (1899) by G. P. Raines, *The Disputed V.C.* (1803) by Captain F. S. Brereton, *Barclay of the Guides* (1908) by Herbert Strang, *When Nicholson Kept the Border* by J. Claverdon Wood, and *A Hero of the Mutiny* by Escott Lynn. In all these stories young English heroes perform valiant deeds and under extraordinarily difficult conditions uphold the honour of the British Flag.

Two other novels, though they do not belong to the juvenile class, are of no higher standard. H. Seton Merriman takes the reader to Calcutta and Delhi, England and Ceylon, and gives a few glimpses of Nicholson in *Flotsam*. Talbot Mundy's *Ring Ho!* published in 1914 is the other. It is notable for three characters that are well drawn.

the typically proud, loyal, and resourceful Rajput chiefs, Mahommed Gunga (a curious name) and Alwa, and the young English hero 'Chota Cunnigan Bahadur'

The Mutiny so much abounds in moving incidents and deeds of heroism and barbarism, of comedy and tragedy, of love and treachery, that it will never cease to appeal to students of history and literature. But it is so complex in detail, so extensive in range, and so profuse in deeds and men that any attempt to tell a consecutive story of it is difficult. Action is solid, narrative is linear, said Carlyle. This is why it is difficult to convert even a simple action into a straightforward narrative. But when history comes into contact with fiction, when fact clashes with fancy and when race prejudice and pride blur the vision, the complexity of the task increases beyond the powers of ordinary story-tellers. It is, therefore, not surprising that nearly all the Mutiny novels so far written are poor specimens of art. They aim at presenting as complete a picture of this cataclysm as possible. But they only succeed in collecting together a large number of scenes and incidents both real and imaginary, without being able to unify them into an artistic whole. In all these novels there is no character who can compete in brilliance with the actual persons who rose into prominence during the Mutiny and who adorn the pages of history. Nor do we come across any character like Dickens's Darnay or Thackeray's Esmond. The Indian characters introduced are either treacherous villains or spies. The romance that invests the name of the Rani of Jhansi, the Maulvi of Fyzabad, or Tantia Topi, the deeds of valour and sacrifice performed by many an Indian in defending and giving shelter to Englishmen, women, and children at the risk of their lives, the struggle of the sepoys between regard for their English officers and love for their religion, the feelings of patriotism that must have actuated many Indians to join the rebels, the final tragedy of the Moghul Dynasty, the pathetic situation of hundreds of men and women of

royal blood who were at once reduced to beggary, the misery of the civil population during and after the siege of Delhi and the relief of Lucknow and Cawnpore, have either been altogether ignored or receive perfunctory treatment. Some English writers like Sir G. O. Trevelyan and Mr. Edward Thompson have tried to show the other side of the medal. But they have written histories not novels. We await writers who will not only sing paeans of victory but write tragedies of defeat.

69 *Annexation of Upper Burma—Miss Tennyson Jesse*

The subsequent history of Anglo Indian historical novels does not contain any novel of importance with perhaps one exception. *The Lacquer Lady* (1929) by Miss Tennyson Jesse. After the Mutiny the only wars that disturbed the peace of India were on the Frontier or in Afghanistan or those that led to the annexation of Upper Burma in 1885. Sir Henry Mortimer Durand describes the adventures and love affairs of an English officer in the Second Afghan War in *Helen Trevelyan* (1892). Captain F. S. Brereton takes up the story of the Third Afghan War in *With Roberts to Candahar* (1907). The stories of minor campaigns and expeditions against frontier tribes are discussed separately in the present work in chapter VI. The Indian Home Rule Movement and the activities of the Congress which form such a prominent feature of the political history of India in the first quarter of the twentieth century, have a separate chapter devoted to them. Miss Tennyson Jesse's novel however demands separate treatment not only on account of the position of Miss Jesse among the famous writers of English fiction of to-day but because of the merits of the book itself.

Miss Tennyson Jesse is not an Anglo Indian novelist in the strict sense. In *The Lacquer Lady* which is the only novel in which she deals with India she merely selects a period of British Indian history for the exercise of her imagination. She deals with the Burmese War which

resulted in the annexation of Upper Burma in 1885, incidentally illuminating a dark corner of recent history. Miss Jesse acknowledges in her preface to the book that it was from the late Rodway Swinhoe, 'expert in matters Burmese and the Father of the Mandalay Bar' that she learnt 'the true story of the causes which led to the annexation of Upper Burma', how it was 'Fanny' and her love-affair, and not the pretext of the Bombay-Burma corporation that at last drove the Indian Government into action! If Miss Jesse's claim is just, it would appear that but for the disappointment of 'Fanny', the Maid of Honour of Queen Supaya-lat, in her love-affair with a Frenchman, and her vindictiveness, the Indian Government might have allowed the French to consolidate their influence in Upper Burma. If that be the true cause of the Burmese War, Miss Jesse has made a valuable contribution to history, besides adding a first-rate book to the list of interesting novels relating to India. It is for the historian to sift fact from fiction, and this, in the absence of independent historical evidence, is not an easy task. But as a book of fiction, imaginatively re-creating a part of India in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, which is not familiar to Indians themselves, Miss Jesse's novel deserves unstinted praise. It gives a vivid picture of the Kingdom of Ava in the 'eighties, the last of the despotic realms where 'rivals were still destroyed on the accession of the new King, where palace intrigues still, while Dufferin ruled in India and Gladstone in England, might determine life or death for hundreds of people', and where young girls of the royal family of Burma were slaughtered wholesale by repeated blows of a heavy club on their throats. It is a strange country and a stranger life to which Miss Jesse introduces us. 'The description of the Gem city of Mandalay, with its high rose-red walls, its myriad houses, its golden spires, its scarlet palaces, its gold and white pagodas, of the palace with its Lord White Elephant 'receiving his breakfast of milk, drawn

by himself from the breasts of Burmese women , of Supaya lat the Centre Princess who has 'no loves or hates' of palace intrigues during the illness of King Mindoon of the gruesome slaughter of the princes and princesses of the life in the palace where time itself was oddly different from time in the west of the four dressings of Supaya lat' and of the march of General Prendergast to the Eastern Gate of the Sacred City show the undoubted literary powers of Miss Jesse That she knows the value of artistic restraint is shown by her description of the deposition of King Thibaw

The sun was almost setting when Thibaw turned his head before getting into his cart to look his last at the palace and the seven tiered Pyathat was lit all along its edges as by fire He looked he did not speak and he allowed himself to be put into the cart Eight white umbrellas were carried over the cart in sign of royalty but not the ninth to which he had been entitled as the ruler of Ava (p 323)

The Lacquer Lady is the best of Anglo Indian historical novels The characters of Thibaw of Supaya lat and his ministers are drawn full length. Of the fictitious characters Fanny stands out supreme a masterpiece of creative imagination

CHAPTER XI

THE MYSTERIOUS EAST

01 ANGLO-INDIAN MYSTERY NOVELS

A CONSIDERABLE number of novels belong to the class which may be designated by the general term 'mystery'. This class includes the detective novel, the novel of crime, the novel of adventure (search for jewels or hidden treasure), and the esoteric novel having for its *motif* a peep or an attempt at a peep into the unseen. Novels of this class are very plentiful. India as a land of mystery and mysticism, India as the birth-place of many occult sciences and practices, of curious rites, ceremonies, and superstitions, India as a land of untold wealth and priceless jewels, either lying buried in the ground or concealed in strange ways and places, and lastly, India as a land of secret societies, of revolutionary propaganda, of German or Bolshevik machinations, has attracted many writers of fiction.

70 *Jewel hunting*

Mystery novels in which the element of mystery is connected with priceless diamonds or rare pearls have been very popular. Perhaps it was the success of Wilkie Collins in *The Moonstone*, a perfect story of its kind, and later of Stevenson's tales entitled *The Rajah's Diamond* which produced a host of imitators. *The Moonstone* was published in 1868 and fourteen years later (1882) appeared Marion Crawford's *Mr Isaacs A Tale of Modern India*, a thrilling mystery novel that has something of the fascination of the *Arabian Nights*. The prototype of Mr Isaacs was Mr A. M. Jacob, the Hebrew jeweller who was involved in the famous Hyderabad Diamond case. The esoteric Buddhist who captivates the English girl is said to have for his model a notorious Persian merchant who had a

dispute with the Nazim about a famous diamond *The Naulabka* by Kipling and Balestier Wolcott is another of the famous novels having for its plot the quest of a famous necklace by an American adventurer, who had promised to present it to the wife of the President of the Railway Board

Most of the novels published in the first quarter of the nineteenth century and having for their theme the search after or the occult influence of some precious stone or mysterious jewel are generally of a low order of merit. Some titles are curious *The Purple Pearl* by Anthony Pryder and R. K. Weekes is amusing. It is in India alone that purple pearls are found to be handed over to English lords by love lorn Indian Begums. *The Beads of Silence* by L. Bamburg is a poor imitation of *The Moonstone*. These beads of silence are brought over from India. They are amulets of such magic power that any one touching them without the permission of their keeper (a Priest) dies suddenly. Ganpat in *Stella Nash* weaves a tale round a strange green jade and hidden treasure, the sight of which staggers even the solid Monocloid.

If the Government of India hears about them they'll go up through the roof cut the Army budget for ten years and hurriedly take off half an anna from Salt on the strength of this unearned increment (p. 328)

It is a notable story above the ordinary level, in which the love interest has been kept subordinate to the thrill of adventure. Paul Merriman is well drawn. He is a strong silent and splendid man and his love for Stella Nash with eyes of deepest grey under slumbrous lids of faultless curve gets the reward which it well deserved. A piece of green jade inspires the romance of Talbot Mundy's *Om*. It takes the reader from the plains of Hindustan to the valley of the Abors through the mysterious regions across the Himalayas. Ganpat has written two other romances of this type *A Mirror of Dreams* (1928) and *Speakers in*

Silence (1930) The first is a close imitation of Kipling, the second is based upon an original idea, to wit: there must be ultra-audible sounds just as there are ultra-violet rays. The Speakers in *Silence* speak a language of their own, akin to the language of birds and beasts, and they organize a conspiracy against mankind (not merely against the Indian Government or the British Empire)—a conspiracy with its roots in Lahore. 'Ganpat' possesses imagination and a keen sense of humour. His romances of Central Asia and the mountain fastnesses of Tibet are popular but crude. A mystery story requires a well-planned and rigidly constructed plot, and 'Ganpat' is weak in construction. J. I. Emery's *Luck of Udaipur* takes the reader back to the India of three centuries ago—'an India shrouded in sinister mystery'. The Luck of Udaipur is a great diamond which is stolen by an English adventurer in the service of a neighbouring State. On account of the loss of the stone Udaipur suffers defeat in war. Lady Chitty's *The Black Buddha*, piled thick with strange coincidences and hairbreadth escapes, takes us over three continents. The plot is of the type of a cinema scenario. Roy Rushworth, the son of an Indian Rani and Professor Rushworth, is heir to an English peerage, but the marriage certificate of his mother is missing, as also papers relating to a hidden treasure. The Black Buddha, 'the consecrated confederate of evil doers', is the repository of the secret. Obviously Lady Chitty has confounded Kali with the Buddha, for who would associate with the gentle Buddha and his worshippers deeds of violent crime attributed to them? There are several mystery novels connected with the jewels of Kali and her worship. Helen Fairley's *Kali's Jewels* is a silly story of 'hereditary transmission' of criminal instincts. The quest of Kali's jewels, 'crystals of water, opals of fire, and rubies of blood', is the crude device adopted to remove an undesirable husband. Miss Fairley's knowledge of India and Indians may be judged from her reference to Abdulla as a Hindu. The love of

Sunita with large fawn like eyes set wide apart in a small oval face of ripe wheat colouring, for Eric Dane leads nowhere John Easton in his *Matheson Fever* (1928) describes an ancient Hindu goddess (1) called Ram Chandra a sort of goddess which according to the author almost persuades one to be a missionary or rather an Inquisitor — a gross obscene figure worshipped by the coolies Matheson a Bombay bookmaker loses his life in the attempt to possess an emerald sacred to the goddess It is a poor thriller ill conceived and badly developed to which neither hamadryads and black panthers nor yogis and sadhus lying stretched on beds of spikes nor storms and cyclones are able to impart life The most enjoyable thing in the book—unless our fancy has been caught by the younger Miss Pettigrew the policeman's daughter who desperately strove to make the station brighter—is the famous couplet of Kipling

Now it is not good for the Christian's breath to hustle the
Aryan brown
For the Christian riles and the Aryan smiles and he weareth
the Christian down

The Brand of Kali by Eleanor Pegg and *The Vengeance of Kali* by Ian Marshall appeared only recently Miss Pegg's book is superficial but Ian Marshall has managed to produce a tolerable story of mystery and murder The sight of Kali staggered Chiavocchi

It represented a woman but the maddest dreams of a drunkard or an opium maniac could not produce anything more frightful It was the very apotheosis of all that is obscene and bestial (p 200)

The Curse of Kali by Arthur Greening has nothing to do with either the jewels of Kali or the mysterious rites connected with her worship Kali is the goddess of thugs and this romance is concerned with them Tom Tempert's fiancée Maud Gordon is kidnapped by thugs and his father is murdered by them Maud's escape from death

is well planned. The sacrifice of beautiful maidens at the altar of Kali forms the subject of Joan Conquest's romance, *Leonie of the Jungle* (1921). Leonie, the pretty daughter of a V.C., having been subjected to mesmeric influences as an infant, behaves strangely in England. Her aunt, a lady with a past, practically sells her to Sir Walter Hickie, but Leonie loves Jan Cuxson. In Madho Krishanagar she has an Indian lover whose hypnotic power she is unable to resist. After Sir Walter's horrible death she is drawn towards India, meant to be sacrificed to Kali, but an opportune earthquake and the gallantry of her Indian lover save her dramatically. Madho Krishanagar dies to save her. As a story the book is too full of lurid details. As an expression of Joan Conquest's sympathy for Indians and a picture of the worship of Kali it is remarkable. She describes the 'original goddess' in all her terror.

'Yet it is not the horror of the repulsive physique hewn in stone which holds you breathless before her, *you* know it is stone you are looking at, just as you know that the Sphinx is stone, but as with the Sphinx you feel the life of centuries throbbing through the carved monster, you feel that its breath, which is about you, is the wind which has swept across the desert places and teeming cities of the East, you feel that the eyes which are upon you have seen all things, in fact, you are almost mesmerised by the force of worship before you suddenly wrench yourself violently round to face the sun outside the open door' (Ch. xxxviii, p. 185).

Joan Conquest has a sense of humour, which occasionally relieves the grim atmosphere of the main story. She tells us that 'I.C.S.' when written in full means 'God's Anointed', that Anglo-India suffers from 'social myopia', and that Eurasian speech is 'like the broken flight of maimed birds over a lawn in the process of being mown'.

The Golden Lotus by Mr G. E. Locke is a detective story centring round the death and the will of the wealthy Sir Jarvis Walreddon, who had gone out to make a fortune and who 'wasn't too particular how he did it'. He

had his own code of ethics—never preyed upon any white man and was a staunch and loyal friend. On the other hand, he did not hesitate to loot Indian temples wholesale and carry off their richest treasures (p 306)

Among the achievements of this English knight are his love for a Rajput Princess, Tara Lal whom he carried into the fastnesses of the Himalayas and the looting of the temple of the goddess Tashna in the Kingdom of Ramaghad which contained a rose pink diamond of almost fabulous value known as the star of dawn. The looting of the diamond creates for him a host of enemies. *The Golden Lotus* is a medley of plots and motives. Mr. Locke's knowledge of India is superficial. Tara Lal as the name of a Rajput princess is bad enough but when the author tells us that Hafiz Ali was the Hindu chauffeur of the Golden Lotus we begin to suspect that the author does not know much about India.

71 *Novels of the occult*

Quite a number of mystery novels derive their inspiration from the occult the esoteric or the spiritual element in Indian life. John Henry Willmer in his book *The Transit of the Souls* (1910) says

Although modern civilization has worked and is working many changes in India yet the echo of the past remains the spirit of departed grandeur of magnificent follies hovers over ruined mosque and temple (p 25)

It is a simple tale of the marvellous. The soul of the Nawab of Lucknow enters the body of Charlie Beeton and the soul of Beeton enters the body of the Nawab. Both are in love with Ethel Farwell. The author thus finds an excuse for contrasting the heroic English gentleman with the cowardly Indian beast. Mme Z. L. Cavalier's *The Soul of the Orient* (1913) is an original story of astrology and eastern mysticism proving that to America and the Americans more than to most countries is it given to revere the orient. In C. E. Bechhofer's *The*

Brahmin's Treasure (1923), the hero, a young Englishman in India, is torn between the rival attractions of love and occultism. He is drawn towards oriental occultism by an old Sadhu, deformed and dehumanized by his austerities. Richard E. Goddard in his *Obsession* (1925) exploits the Hindu doctrine of reincarnation or transmigration. Colonel O'Keefe, his wife, much younger in years, and his Hindu butler and shikari, Bharat Singh, 'a pukka Bunjara' who did not know 'any other language except Hindu',¹ are, in fact, reincarnations of three famous French criminals. The novel is silly, but the description of the Chaupati Beach and of the fakir who refused to be photographed and who multiplied half a dozen grains of rice is good. Without cause Mr. Goddard indulges in a long tirade against self-government for India and repeats the settled conviction of Englishmen in India that if 'Great Britain stopped policing the place there wouldn't be a virgin nor a rupee left in Bengal within six months'.

Mrs L. Adams Beck, who wrote sometimes as 'E. Barrington', with the exception of Mrs Penny, is the most important among those writers who have been attracted by oriental occultism. *The Way of the Stars* (1926) is based on the mysticism of the East and Bolshevist influence in India. *The Splendour of Asia* is a tribute to the Buddha and Buddhism. *The House of Fulfilment* (1927) is an imaginative story of the Hindu science of yoga. The scene is laid in Simla and Kashmir where are revealed several marvels, including the discovery of a comrade of Hiuen Tsang, still miraculously alive.¹ *The Ninth Vibration* (1928) is a collection of stories showing Mrs Beck's knowledge of eastern mystery and mythology and her admiration for Buddhism. The stories relate to India, Burma, China and Japan, and reproduce in Mrs Beck's flowery style the romance that lies behind eastern mysticism. The old bridle-way that leads up to the Shipki Pass and the mysteries of Tibet recalls all the marvels of the East, the

Khyber Pass reminds her of silken Samarkand and Bokhara. Occasionally she uses language that is too mystical for a layman.

Sometimes it is the echo of the Ninth Vibration and therefore of harmonic truth. You are awake now. It is the day time that is the sleep of the soul. You are in the Lower Perception wherein the truth behind the veil of what men call Reality is perceived. (p. 25)

But on the whole she writes clearly and vividly. She believes in the doctrine of reincarnation in the glory of Buddhism and the possibility of its revival and in the monks who know their previous births. Her heroine Brynhild Ingmar and Vanna Loring are some sexless emanation of natural things. She describes Brynhild as

an expression herself of some passion of beauty in Nature a thought of snows and starry nights and flowing rivers made visible in flesh. (p. 41)

Mrs Ingmar on the other hand stands for the negation of all beauty, all hope save that of a world run on the lines of a model municipality because she believes only in the evidence of reason. Mrs Beck has wonderfully reproduced the charm of Kashmir in her second story *The Interpreter*. She thinks that Indians understand what life is and she longs for the splendour and riot of life and colour of India. *The Building of the Taj Mahal* is a beautiful piece of workmanship and its appeal is all the greater because it is not so deeply mystical.

So grew the palace that should murmur like a sea shell in the ear of the world the secret of love.

Veiled had that loveliness been in the shadow of the palace but now the sun should rise upon it and turn its ivory to gold should set upon it and flush its snow with rose. The moon should lie upon it like the pearls upon her bosom the visible grace of her presence breathe about it the music of her voice hover in the birds and trees of the garden. Times there were when Ustad Isa, despaired lest even these mighty servants of

beauty should miss perfection Yet it grew and grew, rising like the growth of a flower' (p 241)

Rightly said the great builder, 'It was Love also that built, and therefore it shall endure'

72 *Novels dealing with conspiracy against the British Raj*

Many novels are devoted to Indian sedition and Bolshevik conspiracies to engineer a revolution in India In *Sentenced to Death* by R Mackray, Holiday Browne, the hero, grapples with sedition and saves India He is pursued by vengeful Indians His adventures and hairbreadth escapes are more absorbing than the progress of his love-affair Mr Percy James Brebner's *The Gate of Temptation* (1920) is a meaningless tale in which Bocara, an Oriental Professor of Languages, looks forward to the day when Indians and other peoples will rise in revolt and drive out all foreigners In order to hasten this end, he uses a poisoned ring and his beautiful English wife Estella to kill all 'the ruling intelligences of the European nations' A brilliant English surgeon, who is fascinated by Estella, and her favourite dog, 'Great Dane', frustrate his designs *Red Vulture* (1923) by Mr Frederick Sleath deals with a great Oriental conspiracy to destroy the British Empire The conspiracy is headed by a Eurasian money-lender in England John Henry, the innocent English hero, who is forced to lead a criminal life, defeats it after a series of extraordinary adventures and thrilling escapes Mrs F A Steel has also written a thriller, *The Law of the Threshold* (1924) It is a comprehensive tale of modern India, melodramatic and bizarre in subject and treatment, full of revolutionary conspiracies and a mysterious air of something impending, with prominent parts assigned to Bolshevik and German agents Like the earlier novels of Mrs Steel it is rich in characters and incidents She succeeds in making the flesh creep Mr John Ferguson has written 'a fairy tale and a melodrama'¹ called *The*

Secret Road The main interest of the story lies in the efforts of the Rajah of a hill state to drive out the British by working on the superstitions of the natives who believed that a mystic power lay in a certain Bumali stone presented to the founder of his dynasty by the snake god and lost at the time of the British Conquest. A substitute for this diamond is provided by the Bolsheviks and thus the stage is set for public repetition of the divine grant of the Stone of Power which is to be the signal for an anti British explosion. The British Empire is saved by the indiscretion of an amorous dancing girl, the Moon of Delight who lives in the street of the Seven Stars and who loves a raw boned Scotchman called Saunders a fellow all freckles and red hair. The adventures of Mr McNeville, tinged with love and romance in the quest of this stone make up this fairy tale. *The Black Scorpion* (1926) of Mr Alastair Shannon is another story having for its plot a huge terrorist conspiracy to overthrow the British Government in India and to murder every European in the country. A common feature of all the murders committed by the gang which baffles the C I D is the stencilled mask of a black scorpion on the body of the victims. Jack Calthorpe of the Madras C I D succeeds in capturing the whole gang of philosophical revolutionaries headed by Azeem the cultured Cambridge graduate who hates the West like poison. We are told that it was by consorting with several notorious Indians in the United States that he imbibed a hatred against Great Britain's alleged brutal imperialism.

Mrs L Adams Beck has also written on the mysticism of the East. Her *The Way of Stars* seems to be inspired by the discovery and opening of Tut ankh amen's tomb. Mrs Beck makes her English hero Miles Seton and his friend Conway dig open the tomb of the ancient Egyptian Queen Nefert. The general *motif* of the story is found in the belief that

when the door is opened for them these buried royalties

and indeed the lesser fry also—reincarnate and give trouble. They will have it the Kaiser was born just after the tomb of Rameses the Twelfth was opened' (p. 24)

The Bolsheviks, utilizing this belief, reincarnate Queen Nefert as the Russian beauty 'who pulls the heart strings of Orsinoff, who rides the country with whip and bit', and bring her into the zenana of the loyal Mahmud Mirza, the dark, tall ruler of Mianpur, 'just a bit of the real old India, kept like a curio in a cabinet'. The Bolshevik plot fails—as it was bound to—due mainly to the vigilance of Colonel Gifford, a wise and patriotic English officer of the secret service, the heroic Mr Seton, and the equally heroic Miss Venetia, Seton's fiancée. Seton does not possess any individuality and is easily befooled or hypnotized. He is dominated by the strong personalities of Revel and Colonel Gifford.

The novel is a hotch-potch of improbabilities, of ancient Egypt and modern India, of Oriental mysticism and metaphysics, hypnotism, crystal reading, the fourth dimension, and Bolshevism. But it is well written. The figure of Shah Begam, the mother of Mahmud Mirza, is imposing. Mrs Beck has skilfully reproduced the flavour of Persian life and idiom in Shah Begam's speeches. The picture of the zenana of the Amir of Mianpur, though brief, shows knowledge. But it is the portrait of Jadrup Gosein, the Indian mystic, whose face was 'the perfection of human beauty for the eye that can pierce the unessential to the soul', which reveals Mrs Beck's appreciation of 'the perfume of the hidden spiritual mysteries underlying the golden and coloured veil of the visible life in India'. To her

'India is a dark woman, gliding with soft bare feet behind the curtains of the palace. She is the jewelled mystery, the perfume of the rose. Hers is the magic that, if it ever vanished into the hard light of day, will leave the whole world beggared of its most poignant romance' (p. 99)

When the sullen tide of the Russian armies had rolled

back leaving 'desolation behind and a sad quiet, Miles Seton completed the one lesson of life worth learning in the quiet of the Himalayan heights And he owed it all to Jadrup Gosein

a man of the ancient Aryan people, who knew not where his next meal would come from if not from the hand of charity He had learnt the possibility of touching hands with the Divine Consciousness which man carries with him from birth to birth And whoso has learnt that secret is invulnerable All darts fly past him all swords are blunted (p 305)

Mr Alexander Wilson's *The Mystery of Tunnel 51* and *The Devil's Cocktail* are ordinary detective stories having for their theme the exposure of Bolshevist activities in India by the Intelligence Department The plot of *The Mystery of Tunnel 51* is simpler than that of *The Devil's Cocktail* Major Elliot who is carrying important plans of frontier defence from Simla to the Viceroy at Delhi, is murdered in Tunnel No 51 and the plans are stolen Sir Leonard Wallace the Head of the British Intelligence Department is sent for He succeeds in tracing out the Bolshevist agents responsible for Major Elliot's murder and recovers the plans Sir Leonard succeeds more by bluff and chance than by the exercise of his extraordinary talents The novel has no local colour worth the name But it is interesting to learn that the disastrous riots of last year (1927) in the Panjab were entirely due to Russian influence that the Russians are interested in communal disturbances as they keep the Government and troops fully occupied and that under the cloak of communal riots the movement will start which is intended to drive the British out of India¹

The Devil's Cocktail is a more sensational novel It shows how the British Intelligence Department unravels a Bolshevist plot which threatened the peace not only of India but of the world The novel is full of thrills Rahtz offers Hugh a cocktail with cholera bacilli in it

Hugh's sister is kidnapped, a Eurasian girl, Olive Gregson, accuses Hugh publicly of seduction at the club dance, ruffians are engaged to murder Hugh and his two companions, Cousins and Miles of the American Secret Service. All this is very crude. However, the experiences of Hugh Shannon at a Moslem College in India, based on personal knowledge and mostly of an autobiographical nature, are interesting. In Mahommed Abdullah, we see the sympathetic portraiture of Mr. A. Yusaf Ali, late Principal of the Islamic College, Lahore. His praiseworthy attempts to raise the status of the college are frustrated by a suspicious and foolish college managing committee, and unthinking professors 'born and bred in a system of cram'.

Another story of Bolshevik attempts to create trouble in India is *The Devil's Tower* by 'Oliver Ainsworth' (Sir Henry Sharp). The book is well written, is full of good humour, and shows the author's evident enjoyment of the vigorous throbs of adventure which enliven its pages. But the author does not possess much knowledge of India. For a Rajput Maharani to address her husband as 'Rajy' is inconceivable. The Raja is the hackneyed Rajput hero of Anglo-Indian story-tellers.

'I would that our revered Walter Scott was alive to immortalize it [the story] in one of his fascinating romances', says the disillusioned Scottish communist, Mr. Smith. And 'Oliver Ainsworth' betrays the influence of Scott in every chapter. As a thriller the book may well be compared to Scott's *The Surgeon's Daughter*.

It is remarkable that Anglo-Indian writers have produced no good detective novel. *Indian Detective Stories* by S. B. Bannerjee are incredibly bad. Charles Barry in *The Smaller Penny* has attempted a detective story but it is inartistic and unconvincing. *The Burqa* by Hazel Campbell is a story written with more care and skill. Rama Rao, a patriotic Hindu, is murdered on the sea between London and Bombay. The action is complicated by sub-plots and attention is paid to details, but the element of mystery

is excessive and the solution unsatisfactory. In *Dark Dealings* Mr Andrew Cissels Brown introduces almost all the accepted elements of a mystery novel—a haunted English country house, an Indian fakir, a love romance and a world wide conspiracy to liberate India from British rule. An Anglo Indian home on leave solves the puzzle. Mr G. Frederic Turner in his *A Bolt from the East* (1917) introduces Mirza, the traditional Indian Prince of higher melodrama, whose self imposed mission is to sterilize the human race. The book is overlaid with dull disquisitions on pain, reincarnation and microbes. Outhwaite, like most Anglo Indians, is a disbeliever in Europeanised natives and at once sees in the doings of Mirza 'a treachery to the British Raj'. Of Indian mystery novels Sir Henry Sharp's *The Dancing God* (1926) may be taken as a fair specimen. Girdhari Lal, the unfortunate possessor of the Dancing God, is murdered near the *machan* (for shooting tigers) of Sir Priam Postlethwaite. The latter had unsuccessfully tried to buy the God. The plot hangs round this mysterious murder. Sir Priam's nephew suspects his uncle. But Sir Priam, who has also disappeared, is supposed to have been murdered by Ingram, a dishonest employee of Sir Priam. The story is complicated by Ingram's love for Miss Postlethwaite and by the disappearance of the Dancing God from the Temple of Pipani. At the end the reader learns that the scoundrel of the piece is after all Mohan Lal, the son in law of Girdhari Lal. The characters have no backbone. The author tries to relieve the monotony of the plot by making Grish Babu talk in babu English. The antics of the apparently imbecile Mr Daunt are not amusing.

Miss Hazel Campbell's *The Servants of the Goddess* (1928) is a readable thriller in the vein of Sir Rider Haggard with some influence of Mr H. G. Wells. The Servants of the Goddess, or snow men, are a race of aboriginal inhabitants of Bisanta, who like Mr Wells's Morlocks are doomed to live underground. They are cannibals.

with extraordinarily acute eyesight, developed through constant peering in the dark. They cannot bear light, their heads are hairless, skin bleached dead white, growth stunted, and figure stooping. The hill Raja of Bisanta on his death-bed wills away his State to Major Mortimer, 'in payment of a debt both of cash and of gratitude' ¹ Major Mortimer starts for Bisanta with a band of companions and relatives. He prepares for the expedition with the care of the 'Bellman when he went a-hunting of the Snark' ² Even the padre is not forgotten. For when the villain is defeated and everything ends happily, marriages are inevitable. Pasenadi, the High Priest of Bisanta, is the villain of the story. The Major and some of his companions are trapped in a subterranean dungeon and left to the mercy of the terrible Servants of the Goddess. They are eventually rescued from a horrible death.

Miss Hazel Campbell seems to possess a fertile imagination. But she should have known that even a hill Raja cannot bequeath his State to anybody he likes. She unnecessarily scares her hero by making the new Labour Government pass the Home Rule for India Bill, which makes India 'a Federation of States under the control of a central, and of course purely Indian, Government at Delhi' ³

¹ p. 18

² *The Times Literary Supplement*, 1928

³ p. 161

CHAPTER VII EAST AS SEEN BY WEST

OF ANGLO INDIAN NOVELS OF INDIAN LIFE

THE number of novels in which the English are either altogether absent or play a minor role is comparatively small. In the Anglo Indian fiction of earlier days India and Indians occupied a more prominent position than they do now. India was then new to most English men, and anything written about a strange country to reach which it took eight to nine months, was eagerly devoured. Among the early famous Anglo Indian novelists who wrote novels of Indian life W. B. Hockley, Colonel Meadows Taylor, Alexander Allardyce, Kipling and Mrs. Steel have already been dealt with elsewhere.

About the end of the nineteenth century several writers of minor importance under the influence of Kipling selected Indian life as the theme of their novels. Mr. R. W. Frazer wrote *Silent Gods and Sunsteeped Lards* in 1895. It consists of seven short stories and sketches remarkable for a realistic presentation of Indian life and manners. Mr. R. E. Forrest's *The Bond of Blood* (1896) is a vivid romance based on one of the terrible Rajput customs later on utilized by Mr. Otto Rothfeld in a few of his stories in *Indian Dust*. Mr. W. H. G. Kingston wrote *The Young Rajah: A Story of Indian life and Adventures* in 1897 relating the deeds of a brave and handsome hero, a faithful tigress, treacherous ministers and an old foolish rajah. The author does not seem to know much about India. In 1898 Mrs. Penny's first book *The Romance of a Nautch Girl* was published as a sample of her voluminous work which was yet to come.

73 Mrs. F. E. Penny

Since the publication of *Nautch Girl* Mrs. Penny has been writing on an average one romance of Indian or

Anglo-Indian life every year. Her latest book is *The Wishing Stone* (1930).¹ Some of her books have been discussed before. The majority of her novels, whatever be their main theme, have a background of the religious practices of the Hindus of South India, which, naturally, interested the wife of a missionary. In her autobiographical book, *On the Coromandel Coast*, she discusses some of these practices. In one passage she says:

'Europeans look on the idolatrous practices of the heathen with varied feelings. Many pass them by with a scornful contempt, as though they were beneath their notice. Some are repelled, others merely show an idle curiosity, which is too often mingled with a flippancy that gives offence to the keen-witted native. A few openly ridicule the worshippers of idols, a method that does not assist the missionary in his endeavour to teach the people better things' (p. 260)

Mrs Penny's treatment is neither scornful nor flippant. She watches, makes an effort to understand, and records, often with mingled feelings of belief and disbelief. As a missionary she expresses her abhorrence of heathen rites, pagan practices and animistic beliefs, but the artist in her is interested. She quotes Mark Twain with approval:

'One thing is sure, They [the natives of India] are much the most *interesting* people in the world—and the nearest to being incomprehensible. At any rate, the hardest to account for. Their character and their history, their customs and their religion, confront you with riddles at every turn—riddles which are a trifle more perplexing after they are explained than they were before. You can get the *facts* of a custom—like caste, and Suttee and Thuggee and so on—and with the facts a theory which tries to explain, but never quite does it to your satisfaction' (*Following the Equator* (1897), vol. II, chap. 21)

(i) *The mysterious East*. It is this mystery and unintelligibility of the Hindu religion that attracts Mrs Penny as a romancer of modern India. This is well illustrated by *The*

¹ Since then Mrs Penny has published three more novels

Sanyasi (1909) The strange power that the Sanyasi exercises over those who come into contact with him and the practice of being entombed alive (which leads to the Sanyasi's death) are realistically described. In *Dilys* (1903) Mrs Penny shows her familiarity with the strange life of Indian gypsies. *The Unlucky Mark* (1909) is based on superstitions regarding the lucky and unlucky marks of a horse. Sir David Dereham who rides the horse with the unlucky mark wins the race but dies. *Sacrifice* (1910) deals with the meriah or human sacrifices prevalent among the Khonds of the Eastern Ghats. The long lost son of the Rajah of Ellanore is saved from being sacrificed as an offering to the enraged earth goddess by Martin Waldingham assistant to the agent in Ganjam. Incidentally Mrs Penny contrasts Hinduism with Christianity and suggests that the standards of humanity and neighbourly love are lower in Hinduism than in Christianity. She thinks that Hinduism with its fatalistic tendency does not encourage the exercise of heroic or active virtues. In *The Rajah* (1911) she shows the grip that local customs have even on educated and cultured Indians like the Rajah of Shiva pore. *The Malabar Magician* (1912) gives a portrait of Kurumba a hypnotist crystal gazer diviner and mystic of the Malabar jungles. This wild man so strange in his love and hatred reminds the reader of the Sanyasi. He appears again in *The Tea Planter* but has lost some of his mystery. Even *Love by an Indian River* (1916) though it deals with the love of Anthony Basildon for a rich American girl (incidentally contrasting American with English character) is remarkable for the vivid picture of Karlimaya worship in an outlying village of southern India of the power and influence of the *Mahant* and *Pujaris* over the masses the tricks to which they resort in order to keep their hold over the people and of the difficulties and risks to which English officials are exposed in India when their beneficent activities come into conflict with the age long superstitions of the people.

The scene in which little Sunnie desires to say his prayers to Miss Margery Langford because he can see her, and not to God whom he cannot see, is touching. Miss Langford had to consent to 'act as a kind of deputy for the child's Deity' *Living Dangerously*, one of the few novels of Mrs. Penny in which the chief characters are all Englishmen, depicts the belief of the natives in the earth-spirits demanding sacrifice from gold seekers, which is curiously connected with the death of Sir George Avelon in the dolmen. Mrs. Penny shows that the native superstitions are baseless and that Sir George's death is the result of natural causes. Yet the fact of his death occurring where it does, and in the manner it does, lends a terrible significance to native beliefs. *The Swami's Curse* (1922), though without a homogeneous plot, is a storehouse of information about Hindu customs and superstitions. The account of secret, devilish machinations of Savalu's mother and his wife Thiara, inspired by the wicked Swami and his *chela*, against his English friends, and the scene at night in the cremation ground, are gruesome. Mrs. Penny reverts to the favourite theme of hypnotic powers, possession, second sight, and haunted houses in *The Wishing Stone* (1930). Miss Daphne Fernandez, a beautiful Eurasian, possesses a wishing stone, an alexandrite, by day it is dull green, by night it has a red ray that is not visible to every eye. By means of this stone she can get whatever she desires. For example, she wished for the death of Mr. Henley of the Forest Service and he died. Mrs. Penny is careful to explain that he died a perfectly natural death, but Miss Fernandez believes that she killed him, while the native coolies think that Mr. Henley died because he gave orders for the removal of a tree in which a demon was supposed to reside. Mr. Dangerfield, an estranged husband wandering about in India, witnesses some awful ceremonies of propitiation of the river deities. He thinks that what he saw was a human sacrifice. His friend Ashmere sums up the attitude of Mrs. Penny to

the strange beliefs of the large mass of Hindus of southern India

Theoretically I don't believe in it but living among these people—practically—well one doesn't know what to believe
(p. 125)

(11) *Life of the zenana* Another interesting feature of Mrs Penny's novels is the description of the life of the Hindu as well as Muslim zenanas of southern India. Mrs Penny must have visited some of these zenanas herself and conversed with the ladies there. Her pictures of zenana life are monotonously uniform. No Englishwoman—and many are the women novelists who have written about the zenana—has ever seen anything worth admiring in the Indian *andrun*. The only story (omitting the sketches of the Hindu and Mohammedan zenana life given by Meadows Taylor in *Tara*) known to the present writer in which respectable Indian ladies are shown to be a little better than animals is *A Rajput Princess* by Mr Otto Rothfeld. In this respect, Mrs Penny with all her opportunities has not been able to rise above the average level of Anglo-Indian romancers. *A Mixed Marriage* *The Inevitable Law* *Love in a Palace* *Desire and Delight* *A Question of Colour* *The Rajah* *The Rajah's Daughter* *The Two Brides* all give the same description of the zenana.

A zenana according to Mrs Penny is a place where the daylight even at the best of times does not penetrate to any extent¹ where enquiry from the outside world is baffled by the all powerful influence of *Gosha* rules the *gosha* covering in addition to women's faces and figures injustice tyranny favouritism, cruelty and crime where tears are common and self restraint never known where old and young cry like babies and where no one takes any notice of an extravagant display of grief² where the mother-in-law uses stick fire and sack to subdue the recalcitrant daughter-in-law and where the enraged daughter

The Rajah's Daughter p. 103
Desire and Delight p. 189

² *A Question of Love* p. 112

in-law, seizing her by the hair, tries to bite her,¹ where the women are busy only with their tongues, or quarrel over the preparation of the daily meals² Besides being experts in the art of 'doping' and 'drugging', the ladies of the zenana rule behind the purdah even more autocratically than the Judge in *A Question of Love*³ rules the rest of the house, they make the marriages of the boys, intrigue for husbands for the girls, welcome the guru or domestic chaplain of the family, and arrange pilgrimages to temples⁴ The purdah or gosha, the harem or zenana rules the life of Indians to an extent that the outside world scarcely dreams of.

'“The purdah!”' says Derwent in *Love in a Palace* ‘“We have taken India and invested it, but the purdah remains unconquered We shall never get behind the purdah of the East”' (p 253)

Mrs Penny understands those Indian men and women who in dress, education and culture resemble the English, or, to use her favourite phrase, have 'the instincts of an Englishman' She sympathizes with them and feels for them But the woman behind the purdah is a mystery to her There is much unhappiness in the zenana she takes note of that That there may also be love and happiness there, she ignores

(iii) *Indian marriage* A favourite theme of Mrs Penny is the plight of an educated, cultured Indian who is married to an uneducated, ignorant, and foolish girl *The Inevitable Law* is a terrible picture of the tragedy of such unions, and of the unscrupulousness of feminine tyranny and priestly cunning Hassan's marriage to blind Nissa, in *Love in a Palace*, would have been another tragedy but for the English example of Derwent, who loves and marries Miss Orban, even when she becomes permanently deformed It is Derwent who teaches the meaning of

¹ *The Inevitable Law*, p 167

³ p 207

² *The Rajah*, p 48

⁴ *The Inevitable Law*

love to Hassan in whose breast inherited 'ancestral instincts' struggled with western feelings of pity. The same contrast between Eastern and Western ideals of love and marriage and the beneficent influence of English ideals in saving a cultured Indian from a life of compulsory celibacy or animal existence, form the theme of *The Two Brides*—the white bride and the dark one. The white bride is well known to readers of Anglo Indian fiction. The dark one was a terror. When Narasimha, an Indian civil servant, finds her—a wild thing out of the jungle, the little spit fire, silent as a wounded jungle cat at bay ready to spring at him and bite him on the night of his first meeting with her—one can realize his agony. By tact, kindness and sympathy he manages to send her to England. The beautiful little tiger of India, after being subjected to a process of domestication and culture, returned to make a model wife to Narasimha. In *The Rajah's Daughter*, a cultured Indian girl, who has spent ten years in England and who has the instincts and tastes of an Englishwoman, is married to a coarse, vulgar fat zemindar who has already a wife and three children. It is not surprising that she elopes with the Rajah of Worriore. But the plot is unconvincing. How could a Rajah, who allows his daughter to stay in England up to the age of eighteen, think of marrying her to an illiterate boor old enough to be her father? Mrs Penny knows Alma Beaufort, the post War girl who can take care of herself but she does not know the rajah, the ranee or the zemindar of to day. Her rajahs, ranis, and zemindars are grotesque caricatures. The post War India is not so ignorant as Mrs Penny imagines. Read for example the following passage describing how a zemindar's flock boarded a motor car.

One of the chuprassis opened the door and retired quickly. The women, six of them, were unceremoniously pushed and hustled into the car. They were unaccustomed to such conveyances and did not know how to step inside. They were

used to the simple bullock coach into which they clambered and crawled without the aid of steps. They adopted the same means of entering the car and crept in on their hands and knees, feeling their way like so many unwieldy waterlogged spaniels' (*The Rajah's Daughter*, p. 231)

In all these novels Mrs Penny has a purpose. She is a bitter critic of 'the materialism of a Hindu wedding', which she regards as no better than the 'union between a couple of well-bred animals'. Educated Indian men have imbibed the spirit of Western ideals of companionship and love in marriage, while Indian women have not changed. Mrs. Penny objects to mixed marriages. She may not have the same objection to the marriage of Hindus or Musulmans with 'half castes' and Indian Christians. But she has not touched upon this aspect. Her solution of the problem is different. She would like to see her Anwars and Andhra Roys, Hassans and Narasimhas marry girls like Seeta Rama, an Indian girl educated in England and emancipated from the bondage of the purdah and the tyranny of caste and custom. She holds that educated girls alone will solve the problem of marriage for educated Indians who have to work with Englishmen in the higher services.

'Men like Narasimha find their lives restricted and narrowed down to semi-barbarism as soon as they leave the office and seek the domestic hearth, so to speak. I can fancy Narasimha's disgust when he finds his illiterate wife, a woman who can't even read, in the kitchen smelling of raw onions and curiy stuff, and squatting over the ghee pot with her servants. She will probably be abusing them in the language of the street coolie. Perhaps she will be whacking one of the younger girls with a bamboo. Imagine his dislike of the whole scene, his shame when he compares the English wife with the woman who calls him husband. He will be powerless to alter it' (*The Two Brides*, pp. 27-8)

She advocates inter-caste marriages. Caste must go, for caste is the Old Man of the Sea who sits upon the shoulders of the Hindus and governs them despotically. She is

quite conscious of the 'double life' that faces such Indians nowadays and thinks that

the solidarity of the whole of India depends on whether the girls are educated and brought up to the social and mental standard of men like Narasimha (*The Two Brides* p 27)

(iv) *Mrs Penny's characters* Mrs Penny's stories, though not always homogeneous are better planned than those of many Anglo Indian writers. Her characterization, however, is a little flat. In the large gallery of her creations one has to search long to find a striking individual. Among her Indians the nawabs and the I C S men are dummies introduced to illustrate certain aspects of Indian social life. Her Englishmen are not men but ideals or examples for Indians to follow. Waldinghams Warboroughs and Ted Dersinghams are healthy heroic men who unflinchingly do their duty by the ignorant superstitious dark millions in a strange country under difficult conditions. Mrs Penny's best characters are not to be found in the regulation type of heroes and heroines of romances. It is her minor characters that show her power of etching out well defined individuals. She has a remarkable number of such creations. Her bearers like Paddybird¹ Ramaswamy² Miguel³ and Abhoy⁴ Mrs Hulver⁵ the housekeeper and Elton Brand⁶ who had a little weakness of being overtook, are Dickensian in their conversation and conduct.

(v) *Mrs Penny's descriptions* Mrs Penny's novels are full of descriptions of beautiful scenes and sights of southern India. She is familiar with the plains of Madras and its hills rivers and jungles. The following is a description of Coonoor on the Nilgiris the most perfect hill station in India, and of the view from Tiger Hill.

The broad expanse of level country stretching away to the south was like a vast ocean lying calm and motionless in an

The Malabar Magician
⁴ *Pulling the Strings*

Dilys
⁵ *The Outcaste*

³ *The Sonjars*
⁶ *Dilys*

opalescent haze of heat Through the thin veil of atmosphere the lakes and tanks shone with a silver gleam Long roads—highways from the great cities of the north to the temples of the south—were distinguishable by their wonderful avenues of banyan and tamarind trees, giants of welcome shade of soft green on the golden land at that distance'

'The Bhowani river, sobered by the level of the plains and no longer turbulent, flowed seaward, a silver band on a ribbon of yellow sand A town of mud-built houses clustered upon its banks round a shrine that lifted its wedge-shaped tower above the low tiled roofs About the town, and on either side of the river, the plain was patched with green rice-fields watered by canals that were like threads of shining white silk' (*Love in the Hills*, p 204)

74 Mr Edmund White.

A more important novelist of Indian life than Mrs Penny is Mr Edmund White of the Indian Civil Service He was in India from 1867 to 1892, and served in the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh His first district was Bareilly, then a very lonely place, where he was thrown very much on his own resources 'There he learnt', as Sir T W Holderness informs the readers in his appreciation of Mr Edmund White,¹ 'to know and like the people over whom he was placed', and it was there that 'he acquired that intimate and minute knowledge of Indian life in its domestic and tender aspects which appears on every page of his Indian stories' Because of his continued stay in one district 'the Indian people and Indian life and thought became to him an open book, so far as that is possible for a European' After his retirement he began to write novels in which he has recorded his observations of Indian life and character He wrote eight novels in all. Four of them deal with English life and four with Indian. The Indian novels are better than his novels of English life

Mr Edmund White has tried to understand the East from the Eastern point of view and to interpret it to the

¹ Prefixed to *The Pilgrimage of Premnath*, 1918

West That the West has not understood his interpretation is clear from the scant notice that has been taken of Mr White's Indian novels This is explained partly by the technique of Mr Edmund White his style the atmosphere of his stories and their *motif* but mostly by the general indifference with which questions ideas events, and characters purely Indian are regarded by the average Englishman

*Biñli the Dancer*¹ is a romance of unusual interest Biñli is not the ordinary singing girl of the *Arabian Nights* She is idealized but is still true to life and gives an insight into the life work feelings and passions of this class of women who have escaped the notice of most writers since they do not see in Indian dancers anything but a sensual appeal Biñli lives for her art and falls in love with a Pathan of a noble family The nobleman offers her marriage The conflict which Biñli experiences between her longings as a woman and her ambition as an artist is remarkably well portrayed Biñli's flight with her lover the description of the storm and of the long last farewell show Mr White's power of skilful narration and word painting The tragic theme is well managed and the pictures of life in North India are full of local colour

Chanda Bae the Red Fairy of *The Path*, is the counter part of Biñli

Seated on a bamboo cot at the door of a house she held a silver mirror and combed her glossy hair in the warmth of the early sun Her garments were of bright chintz quilted the unbuttoned jacket displaying a tinselled bodice glittering in the sunshine (p 10)

She earns gold from the rich to feast the gallant men of wit and learning with whom she associates She loves her blind irritable old granny, she loves still more 'the joy in the sun and the light, in the shade and the breeze, the delight of the song and the dance and the sweet savour

of the dainties',¹ but she understands that a service of love is needed to sweeten life. She regards the poets whose songs she sings as 'the inspired interpreters' of warm feelings and aspirations for which she can find neither words nor melodies sufficiently expressive. She regards music as the touchstone of sympathy, for, as she says, 'we can awaken sleeping feeling, we cannot implant it'.² Though her moral life is not pure, she grudges no toil for the perfection of her art. She loves the toil needed for its perfection. Yet she cries 'I would live for one man only, for him to whom my heart yearns', and touched by the address of the Master, is prepared to cast away 'her health, youth, joy of the day', her very life, to support and console him. Finally she falls down, and kissing his feet, murmurs:

'“I am thine, my beloved. I leave thee now and for ever, though I die in despair.”' (p. 374)

The scenes and settings of *The Path* will appear strange to European eyes, and Red Fairy's language is very often excessively sentimental. But in her, as in Bijli, Mr. White has laid bare the soul of the much despised Indian dancer and shown that she possesses great capacity for faithful and passionate love, for deeds of heroic self-sacrifice and devotion to art for its own sake. The nautch girl figures in many Anglo-Indian novels. We have already discussed Kipling's superficial knowledge of Indian womanhood, his portraits of the women of the bazaar are equally superficial. Mrs. Penny is too refined to think kindly of nautch girls. Mr. Morgan admires their lithe bodies, their willowy arms, and calls their bare feet 'delicately carved poems in flesh'. But he considers their dance a 'crude barbaric art'. Mr. White's great merit lies in his ability to see below the surface. The only other writer who may be compared with him in this respect is the famous Bengali novelist, Sarat Chandra Chatterjee.

Savitri and Rajlakshmi like Bijli and Lal Pari, though fallen women, are full of lovable traits

The Path has practically no plot Ali Hussain one of the sons of a decayed Sayyid house at Ronahi, returns home after years of travel study, and thought He has been to Jidda and other holy places of Islam he has lived in 'Misr and Rum He has seen much and meditated long and he brings to his people a new message and a new hope In his masterly address, for which the rest of the book is a preparation he brands Islam as the creed of decay and decadence He wants the people to be bold enough to distinguish facts observed from facts revealed The kernel of his teaching is

That all man's life is here under the sun and not elsewhere and that the sources of good and ill are here within this sensible tangible world and not elsewhere that every one of us shall use his powers and opportunities for the advancement of the generation to come and for the establishment of the kingdom of man over all things under the sun

His words shock all 'good sons of Islam Mr Edmund White calls his book an Indian Romance It is less a romance than a series of wonderful scenes of Indian life poetically conceived Its interest lies, not so much in the message of the Sayyid as in his intercourse with the different people who represent the life of Ronahi The book is dedicated to Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, 'that most noble gentleman who sought to unite the piety of the East with the science of the West and Mr White pays a glowing tribute to the persuasive eloquence of this great Mohammedan reformer The book is written with fervour and in a quaint style of much simplicity and distinction with a flavour of the *Arabian Nights* It has a restful quality about it which perhaps is its greatest charm It is not only a tribute to Sir Syed's work, but a plan of work for social reformers who wish to regenerate Islam and infuse into it a spirit capable of competing with the West Mr White's knowledge of the Sayyid

family of Ronahī is intimate and sympathetic, his use of local colour is judicious, and he possesses exceptional facility in the delineation of oriental types.

The Pilgrimage of Premnāth is a pendant to *The Path*. It aims at depicting the spiritual life of the Hindus as *The Path* depicts that of the Mohammedans. Like *The Path* it is a novel of religious philosophy. Like *The Path* it is remarkable more for its dialogue than incidents or construction. Premnāth is a good old Hindu, religious and charitable, who seeks salvation by renouncing the world, his son, Dwarakanāth, loves the world and its pleasures, and his grandson is a rationalist. Mr White is a keen student of philosophy and is himself a rationalist. He speaks through Balgobind and the Bengali post-master at Rohani. He follows 'the school of John Locke and David Hume in its latest development through Charles Darwin and Herbert Spencer, English sages who have done most to dissipate the mist of ancient visions'.¹ Both in *The Path* and in *The Pilgrimage of Premnāth*, Mr White aims at dissipating the 'mist of ancient visions'. The idea underlying this book is well expressed by the following quotation from Wordsworth, Mr White's favourite poet.

Paradise, and groves
Elysian, Fortunate Fields—like those of old
Sought in the Atlantic main
the discerning Intellect of Man
When wedded to this goodly Universe
In love and holy passion, shall find these
A simple produce of the common day

Among the female characters of the book Radhika and the widow Hari Sundari stand out as highly spiritualized visions of Hindu womanhood. Radhika is no jealous and tyrannical mother-in-law, she treats her daughters-in-law with love and consideration. Her ideal is one of love and service, and by her love and gentleness, by her wisdom and tact, and lastly by her death, she enables her husband

¹ *The Pilgrimage of Premnath*, p. 187

to see the error of his spiritual quest. She enables him to realize that paradise is a simple produce of the common day. Hari Sundari is a widow who leads a life of prayer and fasting and cherishes the memory of her dead husband. She finds consolation in her love for her child and in serving the family of her husband. She is the spiritual comforter of the household and its guardian angel. She is not a normal representative of her class but she is nearer

the inner court the little open chamber on the terraced roof, the lamp burning in a niche in the wall the *maina* in the cage fluttering on its perch the widow sitting on a low cane stool in an angle of the parapet, and the astrologer determining the propitious day. Radhika is able to help the astrologer for she remembers the day when she held her first child to her breast this is a peculiarly Indian touch. The description of the supper consisting of the savoury pumpkin curry, the rice ripened by five years in her storehouse and the crisp cakes just touched with asafoetida, is vivid though cakes touched with asafoetida are not a part of our daily food.

Another book by Mr. White is *The Heart of Hindustan* (1910). It is not a novel in the ordinary sense of the word. It has no continuous plot. But it is something better—a portrayal of the administrative machinery of a district in British India from various points of view divided into four books. In the first book he gives the reader some idea of the administration of a *Tahsil*. In the second book, he deals with the difficulties connected with the investigation of crime in India and shows how police officers sometimes shield the real culprit. The third book is a continuation of the second and shows how a guilty police officer escapes punishment and justice is baffled. The fourth book deals with problems connected with the estates of big zemindars. Besides the duty of maintaining

peace and order and administering justice it falls to the lot of a district magistrate 'to reconcile father and son and direct the latter from idleness and dissipation to the duties of the heir to a great estate'. The central figure in the book is Shekh Rafat Ali, Tahsildar of Ronahi, a broad-built man of sixty with a square forehead and bushy eyebrows.

‘He wore a full beard trimmed squarely and dyed to a glossy black, but his moustache was closely clipped, exposing a coarse mouth and regular teeth stained with red betel juice. It was the countenance of a man of action, alert, energetic, and self-reliant, sweetened with an expression of good-humour’ (p. 7.)

He is a great believer in 'hikmat-amali' or expediency. By cajolery and persuasion, and a little intimidation, used as a last resort, he averts a serious Muharram riot in Ronahi. He is a typical representative of the post-Mutiny Indian official, lovable and good-natured, but not over-scrupulous. Mr. White had great admiration for capable and loyal Mohammedan officials of Upper India. He called them the backbone of the administration.

‘They were wise and tolerant and purposeful, trusted by their co-religionists, respected by and on excellent terms with their Hindu neighbours. The breed, it is devoutly to be hoped, still survives, notwithstanding competitive examinations and the decay of patronage’ (Sir T. W. Holderness, Preface to *The Pilgrimage of Premnāth*, p. xiv.)

Most of the other characters also are drawn with insight and skill. We may refer to the spirited Little Lady from Katakū, the Rajput wife of Bharat Singh, heir to the estate of Tikori. The long-suffering Indian wives are so common in fiction that it is a pleasure to come across a lady like her.

75 Mr R J Minney

Mr Minney has been acclaimed by some reviewers as a second Kipling. He has some points in common with him. He was born in India, was sent to England for his educa-

tion and was engaged in journalistic work in India for seven years. He also resembles Kipling in his desire to interpret India to his English readers. But in Kipling's writings, as a critic in *The Bookman* puts it, we have the finished and complete masterpiece. In Minney there is only the promise of what is still to come. In addition to his two novels *Maki* and *The Road to Delhi*, Mr. Minney has written a few descriptive books—*Night Life of Calcutta*, *Across India by Air*, *Midst Himalayan Mists*, and *Shiva or the Future of India*. In *Night Life of Calcutta* he displays the same knowledge of a side of the Indian world that Kipling did in his stories.

At the corner of Zacharia Street and Chitpore, opposite the old mosque, he saw a blind beggar girl sitting with her palm outstretched, as any Englishman may see any day in any city of India. But unlike the average Englishman, the author was evidently touched by her misery. *Maki* is an attempt to reconstruct the history of such a beggar girl. *Maki's* experiences are heart-rending. If her life in the house of her father and her husband was miserable, her life as a runaway girl, beautiful and inexperienced, in the heartless streets of Calcutta is terrible. It is too late that she learns the lesson which it appears to have been Mr. Minney's object to preach: 'how difficult it is to be both good and beautiful in an Indian household'.¹ She then realizes the virtue of the purdah system and the utility of child marriages. We wonder if Mr. Minney is serious. If he is not, his irony is not obvious and is at least misplaced. *Maki's* bitter experiences, if we understand Mr. Minney aright, were due to the fact that she was left too long unmarried. Unmarried she grew to an age when she could appreciate the virtues of a husband.² Her desires carried her out of the household of her father and flung her upon a cruel world in which her beauty became the cause of still greater misfortunes. The book illustrates Mr. Minney's view, more fully developed in *Shiva*, that Indians are very much preoccupied with

problems of sex—a view shared by Miss Katharine Mayo and writers of her school. It is doubtful whether Mr. Minney knows anything about the real life of a Bengali family of the upper middle class. What he seems to have seen is a dance given by some wealthy landlord on the marriage of his son and the accompanying festivities. There is not a single convincing character. Both Toton and the Rajah are caricatures, Hira is a hardened villain. The story shows no traces of finished workmanship. It cannot bear comparison with Kipling's masterpieces. Kipling, like Mr. Minney, does not know much about India behind the puidah, but what little he knows he has at least worked up artistically.

Mr. Minney's second novel, *The Road to Delhi* (1923), is the tale of a little village boy who is lost on the Grand Trunk Road, is carried to Calcutta, seeks service with a European family there, and is very poor and miserable. He is adopted and educated later by a Mohammedan egg-seller, and is caught into the maelstrom of Indian politics and the Non-Co-operation Movement. In the first half of the book Motihari reminds the reader of Kim. His subsequent life in Calcutta is another version of Maki's experiences in the heartless City of Palaces with which Mr. Minney seems to be quite familiar. The author's description of the inhabitants of the Street of Goldsmiths, where lived the 'aged, toothless, crescent-shaped man' who was a master of the unique art of exploiting beggary, is graphic. The second part of the novel is much weaker than the first. The first part has been written by the observant artist, the second by the Anglo-Indian journalist. A whole chapter is devoted to tracing the history of constitutional reforms in India and to special pleadings in the manner of an Anglo-Indian journalist.

76 Conclusion

India has struck Anglo-Indian novelists in a variety of ways. Some of them are attracted by her picturesqueness,

some by her strange contradictions, and a few by her mystery. The general note, however, is one of disillusionment and disappointment. To most Englishmen and Englishwomen in England, as Mr John Eyton puts it, India is merely 'a pear shaped lump on the map coloured red'.¹ Sir Henry Cunningham is the earliest writer to strike this note of discontent.

The India of sentiment and nonsense said Montem is—and always will be the fashion—the India that Burke flooded with bombast and Macaulay with antithesis—the India that Stain writes pamphlets about and Frontinbras sonnets—the India that never was and never will be (*The Carulears* p 100)

He actually finds India 'one of the dullest, most tedious, unpicturesque affairs you can conceive'.

North K. Strange, *Notes of a Journey to the East*, p 11

I which prosperous towns, luxurious gardens and goodly estates were to be found, while the ports did a busy trade in copper, quicksilver, vermilion, coral, alum, ivory, and spices.² Mr Campbell is disappointed with India, for she had failed to fulfil the mystic promise with which she had lured him.³ Similarly to Kathleen in Mrs Savi's *The Daughter in Law*, India was 'the land of her dreams—the land of warmth, sunshine and luxury, of elephants, palm trees and pagodas, picturesque with colour and full of unreality!'⁴ but when in India she failed to find the poetry and romance that she had read so much about in books.⁵ Also Miss Rendell, who 'had a romantic notion about the East', suffers disillusionment when she sees the country.⁶ Mrs Savi ridicules the stories in which India is painted 'in sunset tints' and which omit 'all the noxious things whose mention might lower the charm of the 'artificial East'.⁷ Mr Newcomen writes about the glittering,

¹ *Mr Ram* p 74. ² p 201. ³ *Star of Destiny* p 106. ⁴ p 134. ⁵ p 54.

⁶ *Mrs Savi, Mistress of Herself* p 146. ⁷ *The Daughter in Law* p 147.

shiny, sumptuous, seductive East that one reads about so often but seldom sees' ¹ Mr Y Endrikar finds himself in India 'up against things you can't understand', and discovers that the 'glamour of the gorgeous East wears off' after the first voyage ² To Mr K M Edge India is a land of 'passion and sorrow and stress', ³ to 'John Travers' the luxurious East is a fraud, and the vast world of Ind, 'a world of contradictions',

'where the twice born, the Brahmin whose curse is perdition, can be at the same time a peasant soldier, poor and unknown—where the sweeper is called in irony "prince"' ¹ where the Sikh may not smoke and the Musalman may not drink, where the Musalman must eat of flesh that has had its throat cut in the name of God and the Sikh may only eat of meat that has been beheaded, where beef is pollution to one and pig is horror unutterable to another' (*Sahib-log*, p 88)

This widespread feeling of disgust among Anglo-Indian writers is the result of several causes. In the first place, they pitch their expectations too high. The India of reality must be different from the India of their imagination. Secondly, the very vastness and variety of India paralyses their power of understanding. In spite of their long stay, their knowledge of India remains superficial. What can the mem-sahib—and it is she who has written such a large number of novels of India—possibly know of India—under the peculiar conditions of Anglo-Indian life? Even if prestige and racial pride do not distort one's outlook, no generalization about India can be correct. Finally, it has to be admitted that the way in which the vast majority of the people live is uninspiring. The great and grinding poverty of the masses is responsible for this.

Still there are some writers, though their number is small, who retain their illusions about India. Mrs B M. Croker is touched by the 'groups of picturesque women, surrounding that centre of attraction, the well,

¹ *Blue Moons*, p 144

³ *The Shuttles of the Loom*, p 46

² *Gamblers in Happiness*, pp 22, 69

clad in bright yellow garments confined round the waist with broad massive silver belts their hair ornamented or padded out with fragrant blossoms ¹ Miss Frances M Peard has seen very little more of true India than wayside railway stations

thronged with patient brown people moving about or squatting on the ground with stately women in sorris of chocolate or blue their silver armlets gleaming their brass waterpots at their feet, and running from one to the other their copper coloured imps with nothing particular on Outside the gate a tonga all bright colours and gaiety, and drawn by a small cream-coloured bullock (*The Flying Months* p 252)

Mr Gamon while describing the India of the eighteenth century is filled with a strange sense of longing and melancholy as he breathes the stagnant air, heavy with the voluptuous odour of jasmine, a perfume 'which seems redolent of all the mystery and romance of this land' ² Baroness Alexander de Soucanton hears the call of this great mysterious land, she admires her wonderful Eastern nights, and speaks of her sun as 'a fierce God indeed in all his glory', Mrs Barbara Wingfield Stratford, like her Beryl feels a 'new, warm flood of sympathy for India She admires

the saris of the women red orange blue the bare brown limbs of the children the hum of life and the rhythmic soothing beat of the tom tom the weirdly fascinating thrill of the snake charmer's pipe the discordantly melodious clang of temple bells and blare of conches at sunset (p 136)

Even the great monotonous plains of India have 'a subtle charm for her eyes' In their grey bronze serene endlessness, they give her

a half sad half satisfying sense of a completeness and unchangingness that yet seem to her but yearning after something even more (p 137)

Miss Joan Conquest condemns her countrymen who

¹ *Pretty Miss Neville* p 104

Warren of Oudh p 38

'mistake the eastern courtesy and poetry of movement for obsequiousness and humility' Among the 'highly coloured, bejewelled pictures' which India places before westerners, she sees 'the terrible root' of Indian courtesy and poetry—the root of patience

'with its tentacles ever twining and twisting through the eastern mind, causing the very old to die placidly with a smile on their shrivelled lips, and the young to envisage plague, pestilence, and famine with a mere lifting of the shoulder' (*Leone of the Jungle*, p 50)

Even Mrs E. W. Savin is occasionally touched by 'the India of wide spaces and slow movement, and a peace upon all that was infinitely restful and calm' ¹ Miss Irene Burn admires in India at least 'the freedom of having a bathroom to oneself' ²

The study of Anglo-Indian fiction suggests that Englishmen have a very poor, even contemptuous opinion of Indian character and little patience with their 'Aryan friend'. According to Mrs Penny, the natives of India love 'tortuous methods' of seeking justice ³ They are referred to as 'such dirty warmints'.⁴ In another place they are likened to parrots They love 'a grand village quarrel',⁵ their customs savour of the barbaric,⁶ they are all knaves,⁷ they are not 'distinguished for delicacy of feeling',⁸ they 'go down hill fast when they start',⁹ and it is emotion, not reason, which sways them ¹⁰ Native temperament can seldom be relied upon to do the expected thing.¹¹ The belief of Hindus in the sacredness of life does not imply a 'touching love and kindness for all animals'.¹² They are all 'lying rascals' ¹³ The Indian takes

¹ *A Prince of Lovers*, p 202, and *White Lies*, p 21

² *The Border Line*, p 66

³ *Dilys*, p 111, c

⁴ *Ibid*, p 266

⁵ *Ibid*, p 232

⁶ *Rulers of Men*, p 218

⁷ 'John Travers', *In the Long Run*, p 43

⁸ Perrin, *East of Suez*, p 297

⁹ Perrin, *Red Records*, p 227

¹⁰ Hobart-Hampden, *The Price of the Empire*, p 132

¹¹ Campbell, *Star of Destiny*, p 260

¹² *Ibid*, p 204

¹³ C Howell, *Married in India*, p. 67

'a perverted delight in doing things the wrong way' ¹ Fatalism is a habit of mind peculiar to the people of the East where the unexpected might happen at any time - The 'natives haven't the foggiest idea of hygiene' ² They are terribly afraid of surgery, and risk gangrene before they 'will consent to an operation' ⁴ Mr Alastair Shannon is careful to note that Indians have the age long habit of their species' of expectorating with grave deliberation after making a remark ⁵

All this is very interesting Perhaps Anglo Indian writers who have favoured us with this delineation of our character will admit that the population of India does not entirely consist of 'dirty warmints' or 'lying rascals' They must also have met Indians who may even be described as civilized, and Indians who do not expectorate, even without grave deliberation, after making a remark But it is impossible to quarrel with writers of fiction Anglo Indian writers have a right to make fun of us if it pleases them to do so And no harm is done, provided it is understood that Anglo Indian art is not always a faithful copy of life

Irene Burn *The Border Lane* p 245

² E W Savil *Barked Fists* p 81

³ Ibid p 86

⁴ Ibid p 55

⁵ *The Black Scorpion* p 125

APPENDIX

A NOTE ON

SOME INDIAN WRITERS OF ENGLISH FICTION

AN interesting feature of the twentieth-century Anglo-Indian fiction is the emergence of Indians as writers of fiction in English. This is a natural result of the spread of education in India and the increasing familiarity of Indians with English literature. In this note we shall survey the works of those Indian writers only who have written in English, omitting others whose books have been translated into English from vernaculars.

Love and Life behind the Purdah (1901) is a collection of ten stories by Miss Sorabji, some of which originally appeared in *The Nineteenth Century and After* and *Macmillan's Magazine*. The stories do not ignore the lovable qualities of Indian womanhood, but they leave behind a feeling of gloom. *Greater Love*, full of a deep pathos, is perhaps the best story in the whole volume.

Mr S K Ghosh's first book, *1001 Indian Nights* (1905) first appeared in *Pearson's Magazine*. It recounts in the manner of an oriental story-teller the super-normal deeds of Narayanlal. It was followed by *The Prince of Destiny* (1909). This is obviously a novel with a purpose. It seeks to analyse the causes of political disaffection in India, and warns Britain of her unseen peril. The human interest of the story has not been sacrificed to the main purpose of the book. Vashista is well drawn and so is Barath. The scene entitled 'the madness of Kamona', depicting the abandonment of a passion-tossed girl, is a remarkable piece of art. For the vivid glimpse of Francis Thompson that the book gives, and as an Indian's sympathetic reading of the unhappy life of a famous English poet, the book will always remain valuable. In style and subject-matter, and in the variety of its scenes and vividness of its descriptions, the book is above the ordinary.

Mr S B Bannerjea's *Tales of Bengal* (1910) is a sincere but commonplace collection of tales of rural India. Samendra, Ram Harak, and Sham Babu show that humanity is the same in rural Bengal as in rural England. Mr Bannerjea's stories,

whose plots are based on perjury police corruption and zemindari oppression are not devoid of truth but they should not be literally interpreted

The only writers from the Panjab who have attempted English fiction are Sardar (now Sir) Jogindra Singh and Mr Bal Krishna Sardar Jogendra Singh's first two novels *Nur Jahan* and *Nasrin* appeared as serials in *The East and West* *Nur Jahan* is a historical novel and purports to be a romance of the famous Empress of that name *Nasrin* attempts a picture of the nawabs and taluqdars of Oudh while *Kamala* is a romance of a mere hill girl abducted by the agents of a Rajah All the stories are stories of high life *Nur Jahan* is a failure Sardar Jogendra Singh has little historical imagination He shows better knowledge of the life of nawabs and rajahs But the nawabs and rajahs in *Nasrin* are the commonplace drinking sensual effeminate puppets of popular imagination surrounded by a crowd of crafty cringing liars called *mussahibs* The domestic life of Nawab Haider Jung is well depicted and the life of the zenana rings true The book is full of characters and scenes unconnected with Haider Jung's romance Azad with his poetry an autobiographical sketch of t

Eira Estate who believes in m. miseries of his tenants dislikes living on the labour of others finds in the sheltered security of his estates riding reading and writing a peaceful enchantment and yet leads a weary life¹ The cloying, sentimental style and the silly love talk of the story are neither Eastern nor Western *Nasrin* is a poor creature in spite of her poetry and beauty and Haider Jung is unimpressive *Kamla* (1925) shows a maturer style a better plot and sounder technique But it is not free from the author's tendency to philosophize on the transformation of self love into real love and on the path Which Guru Nanak taught me, and Christ interpreted Much of the book is unintelligible metaphysics

The Love of Kusānā (1911) by Mr Bal Krishna is disappointing Apart from the ruggedness of style and other difficulties natural to a writer who attempts to write in a foreign language the photography of Indian life manners,

customs and scenes' for which Victoria Crosse praises him is unsatisfactory. Mohun's sudden love for Kusuma, whom he meets in the romantic surroundings of the Lake at Rajgirhi, and her equally sudden response, are untrue. The author, in his anxiety to please the West, has developed his theme in a manner alien to the spirit of Hindu life. His 'eastern love story' is a mass of improbable incidents and characters. He indulges in sermons and homilies in the midst of his story, which possess neither any originality of thought nor beauty of expression.

Among South Indian writers of fiction, we may mention T. Ramakrishna the author of *Padmini* (1903) and *The Dive for Death* (1911), and P. A. Madhaviah, the author of *Thillai Govindan*. *Padmini* is a historical romance of the sixteenth century and *The Dive for Death* is a story of South Indian superstitions in the manner of Mrs. Penny. *Thillai Govindan* depicts the revolt of a young Hindu against the tyranny of religion, and is probably autobiographical. Among more recent writers from the south, Shankar Ram, K. S. Venkataramni, J. C. Dural, A. Subrahmanyam, and Panchapakesha Ayyar may be mentioned. Shankar Ram's *The Children of Kaveri* (1927) portrays rural life in southern India and describes the simplicity, peace, and beauty of village life. J. Chinna Dural's *Sugritha* is poor as a novel but instructive on the question of child marriages and the plight of widows—a book smacking of missionary propaganda. Mr. Subrahmanyam's *Indira Devi* (1930), as the author himself tells us, is a romance of modern political India. Actually it is a silly tirade against 'inter-racial marriages, inter-castal dinners, a common religion, a common script, and everything else under the moon and sun which some day-dreamer dreams and propounds'. The author has a decided preference for long-winded speeches and suffers from an anti-Mohammedan bias. K. S. Venkataramni's *Morgan, the Tiller* (1927) is not a good novel but is better than *Indira Devi*. Its plot is rambling, the characters are either too good or too bad, excepting the sketch of Meenakshi, the mother-in-law of Ranu. Its only value, like that of *Paper Boats*, lies in descriptive scenes. Mr. A. P. S. Ayyar has published three volumes of short stories since 1925. In his introduction to the first volume of *Indian After-Dinner Stories*, he says that his primary object in writing these stories is 'to provide some healthy laughter and at the same

time to shake some deep rooted prejudices by exhibiting them in their comic aspect. It is doubtful if the author has succeeded in his aim. One has to search long before one comes across a story which excites healthy laughter or even a faint smile. His humour as in *Musician shut the Gate* is either forced or too broad. *Sense in Sex, and Other Stories* shows the limitations of the author. Mr Ayyar's command over English is good and yet it is obvious that he is seriously handicapped by having to express himself in a foreign tongue.

The Desecrated Bones (1926) by Mr Muhammad Habib is the only volume of stories written by a Mohammedan. It consists of three stories two of which are stories of the supernatural and the third historical. In *The Desecrated Bones* Hizabruddin and his gentle wife Zubaida are well drawn. *Spectre and Skeleton* narrates the tragic tale of a dead man's love and jealousy from the other side. *The Spider's Web* is easily the best of the three and is remarkable for a vivid sketch of Emperor Akbar, the Spider and of Mehran Nisan—a type of woman which Nature has always produced and society has always failed to recognize.¹ Mehran Nisan is Mr Habib's contribution to Anglo-Indian fiction.

His Only Love (1930) by Sir Hari Singh Gour is a curious work. It takes us to a world that is neither Eastern nor Western. Perhaps the object of the author is to show the sad plight of Indian men and women when they have cut themselves adrift from their ancient moorings. If the picture of society presented by Sir Hari is even partially true we have nothing but pity for our emancipated brothers and sisters.

You know says Imam that I have been most miserable in my domestic relations. They have been my life's handicap till I met Rita. (p 109)

But it is not Imam but Himmat the hero of the book who represents the author. The author desires that marriage should be an alliance not a servitude. He advocates spiritual marriages of conscience and makes Himmat find in the neurasthenic Shahinda his true mate. It is doubtful however if she would make Himmat happy.

Indian writers and story tellers on the whole do not compare favourably with Anglo Indian writers. That they write in

a foreign tongue is a serious handicap in itself. Then few of them possess any knowledge of the art of fiction, they do not seem to realize that prose fiction, in spite of its freedom, is subject to definite laws. In plot construction they are weak, and in characterization weaker still. Their leaning towards didacticism and allegory is a further obstacle to their success as novelists. As writers of short stories they have occasionally achieved success. But with very few exceptions their contribution to Anglo-Indian fiction is of little importance. We have to learn much before we can 'surprise the world with native merchandise', or with 'bright divine imaginings' in prose fiction.

¹ Robert Bridges, *Errand to India*

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314

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- A Question of Colour* 1926

Penny, F E —*continued*

Pulling the Strings 1927

A Question of Love 1928

The Wishing Stone 1930

Get on with the Wooing 1931

Donald Oakley 'axed' from the navy finds a billet as 'valet-nurse' to a rich invalid and falls in love with his daughter

Then they meet in India, and Estelle has much difficulty in bringing him up to the scratch

The Lady of the Rifle 1932

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A GLOSSARY

OF INDIAN WORDS USED IN THE BOOK

Ajaib ghar a museum
Androon or *Andrun* literally
 inside means a zenana
Asura a demon
Atta flour

Banghi a balance like contriv-
 ance to carry luggage or water
Bania same as *Buniah*
Begum wife of a respectable
 Mohammedan or of a nawab
Bhat a court or professional
 musician
Bhula admī a good man a gentle
 man
Bocha a kind of chair palankin
 —*Hobson Jobson*
Boorqa or *boorkha* or *burqa* a
 veil used by Mohammedan
 women covering the whole
 of their body
Bund an embankment
Bunjab a grocer
Burra khana literally a big meal
 dinner
Burra sahib a district magistrate
 or a commissioner
Byragi an order of Hindu
 ascetics

Chapkan a long loose coat
Chaprassi a peon
Chaukidar a watchman.
Cbela a disciple
Chit a note or a certificate
Chobdar a servant carrying a
 mace
Chupatti or *chupatti* an un-
 leavened bread
Competition wallah an Indian
 Civil Service man

Dakait a dacoit or a robber
Datura a poisonous Indian
 plant
Dhal pulse
Dharna sitting before a man's
 house till one's request is
 granted
Dirzee a tailor
Dhobi a washerman
Durga an Indian goddess of
 terrible aspect

Ekkah a one horse high backed
 Indian carriage

Ferrishta an angel
Ferrunghi or *Feringhi* European
 or English
Frangistan Europe or England

Ghat a landing place with steps
 to a river
Ghee clarified butter
Gora lit white means a Euro-
 pean
Gosha lit corner privacy
 purdah
Gram chick pea or any pulse
 used as horse fodder
Guru a religious teacher

Hakim a physician
Hamadryad a venomous Indian
 serpent
Hartal closing of shops and
 cessation of business strike
hookah a pipe in which the
 smoke is made to pass through
 water
Hugga same as *hookah*

Inshaalla, 'God willing'

Izaat, honour

Jadoo, magic

Jehad, a religious war, a crusade

Kabai, one who carries, a Hindu water-carrier, a porter

Kala-jugga, 'a dark place', a secluded dark corner in a hall for love-making

Khaddar, coarse homespun cotton cloth

Khansaman, an Indian steward, bearer

Khitmatgar, an Indian servant

Khud, ravine

Kincob, costly silken Indian cloth

Kismet, fate

Kurta, a loose Indian shirt

Kuthas, religious recitals of stories from sacred books

Machan, an erection for shooting big game

Mahajan, a class of business men and money-lenders

Mahatma, 'high-souled'

Mahant, a Hindu priest

Mai-bap, 'mother and father'

Mama, an Indian passerine bird

Mallie or *mali*, a gardener

masalchi, 'a torch-bearer', a kitchen servant

Mela, a fair

Mem-log, European or English women in India

Mem-sahib, the wife of a sahib

Momia, an ointment supposed to be made of the fat of young children, and having strange properties

Mufassil or *mofussil*, provincial

Mugger, a crocodile

Mullah, a Mohammedan priest

Murghi, a hen

Musalchi, same as *masalchi*

Mussahib, a 'companion' or gentleman-in-waiting of a prince

Mussulmanee, a Mohammedan woman

Najd or *Neyd*, 'a kingdom of Arabia'

Nautch, a dance

Nawab, a Mohammedan prince or big landlord

Nihang, an order of Sikh ascetics

Nimaz, Mohammedan prayer

Palenkeen, a palanquin

Pan-dan, a casket for keeping betel leaves

Pankah, a fan

Parry-ah, pariah, an untouchable of Southern India

Paunjamah, or *pajama*, a loose Indian trouser

Pelaw, an Indian dish of rice and meat

Pucca, real, staunch

Piyari, a Hindu priest

Pinkah, same as *pankah*

Pinkah-colle, a servant for pulling the punkah

Purdah, seclusion of women

Sadhu, a Hindu hermit

Sahib, a European in India

Sahib-log, plural of sahib

Sais, *syce*, an Indian groom

Salaams, a Mohammedan greeting

Sannyasi, an order of Hindu ascetics

Sanyasin, same as *sannyasi*

Sari, an Indian female garment

<i>Sati</i> or <i>Suttee</i> immolation of a Hindu widow on her husband's pyre	<i>Tahsildar</i> the head of a tahsil
<i>Seras</i> an Indian inn	<i>Tattie</i> a bamboo and grass screen
<i>Shikari</i> a hunter	<i>Teerain</i> corr of train
<i>Shutur be mahar</i> lit a camel with out a rein hence a man with out any self-control	<i>Tiffin</i> tiffin or luncheon
<i>Sirkar</i> Government	<i>Topee walla</i> a European
<i>Snadeshi</i> belonging to one sown country	<i>Tonga</i> a one horse vehicle
<i>Swami</i> Lord master	
<i>Swaraj</i> self government	<i>Yogi</i> one who practises Yoga
<i>Tahsil</i> a sub division of a district in India	<i>Zamindar</i> a land holder an agriculturist
	<i>Zenana</i> secluded apartments of Indian women

INDEX

- 'Afghan', 95-7, 142-4
 Ainsworth, Oliver, *see* Sir Henry Sharp
 Ali, Abdullah Yusaf, 280
 Allardyce, Alexander, 10, 64, 65, 66, 283
 Andrul, 88-90
 Anglo-India, its characteristics, 13-30, 55, 56-7, official, 61, 62, 63, 113, 223-9, 237-8
 Anglo-Indian, phrase, 1, novel, periods of, 1-2, ingredients of, 2-3, theme of, 3-4, its artistic quality, 4, Mrs Bell on, 27, nabobs, 4-7, *Qui-Hais*, 7-9, Competition wallahs, 9-12, women, 28, 117-18, 121, characters, 39, 63, 64, 68, 69, 84, 112, 121, 122, 129, 132, 146, 149, 150, 152, 163, 229, 240, 267, 271, 291, mutiny, 195, 196, 198, 199, 200, 218, 256-65, art, 305
 Arnold, Dr, 56
 Arnold, Sir Edwin, 59
 Arnold, Matthew, 56
 Arnold, W D, 1, 8, 17, 56-7
 Arya Samaj, 201
 Askew, Alice and Claud, 174
 Aurangzeb, 247
 Ayyar, A P S, 242, 308
 Aziz, 229
 Bal Krishna, *see* Krishna, Bal
 Bamburg, L., 269
 Bannisdale, V Erskine, 12, 252-3
 'Barrington, E', *see* L Adams Beck
 Bechhofer, C E, 273
 Beck, L Adams, 100, 195, 207, 241, 243, 274-5, 277-8
 Beckford, 51
 Beresford, Leslie, 23, 26, 155, 198, 199, 200, 201 n, 207 n
 Bell, Mrs G H, 13, 18, 20, 27, 28, 109, 117-22, 201 n, 205 n, 208, 210, 252, 253, 302, 304
 Bernays, Robert, 106
 Bishop, Constance E, 23
 Blair, Hamish, 218
 Bolshevism in India, 195, 278-80
 'Boxwallah', 129
 Bradley, Shelland, 17, 131-5, 182
 Brereton, Captain F S, 263
 Bridges, Robert, 310
 Brown, Andrew Cassels, 208, 281
 Brown, Hilton, 99, 157-61, 211 n
 Browne, Sir Thomas, 32
 Bruce, Henry, 155, 186-92, 204, 205 n
 Burma, 265-7
 Burn, Irene, 304
Calcutta Review, 38 n, 50 n, 55, 63.
 Campbell, Hazel, 280, 281-2, 301
 Campbell, H M F, 12, 175
 Campbell, Reginald, 171
 Candler, Edmund, 90-3, 153, 196, 201-4
 Capital, best for India, 219
 Carlyle, Thomas, 49 n, 264
 Carr, Ray, 147
 Carus, Paul, 241
 Casserly, Gordon, 25, 130
 Cavalier, Mme Z L, 273
 Chand Bibi, 50
 Chatterjee, Bankim Chandra, 195
 Cheetoo, 45
 Chesney, Sir George, 256-7
 Chitty, Lady, 270
 Church, Mrs Ross, 14, 16, 23, 24 n, 58
 Clifford, Sir Hugh, 242
 Collins, Wilkie, 57, 248
 Combe, Mrs Kenneth, 197, 198, 205
 Congress, Indian National, 195, 197
 Conquest, Joan, 303
 Cotes, Mrs Everard, 197, 198
 Cox, Sir Edmund, 93
 Craig, A E R, 103, 175
 Crawford, F Marion, 268

Crocker Mrs B M 9 15 109-11
147 302
Crosse Victoria 167
Cunningham Sir Henry 1 10 11
12 17 21 25 27 62-4 67 205 n
301
Curwen H 109
Curzon Lord 114 131

Daily Telegraph 141
Dale Darley 134
Davidson Jessie 147
Dehan Richard 93
Dekobra Maurice 140
Delbridge John 142 145
Delhi Ridge, 263
Dell Ethel M 93
Dhar K N 63
Dick G 166
Dickens Charles 37-8 62 264
Dickinson G Lowes 13 -7
Diver Maud 13 28 97 109 111-
17 169-71 254
Dore Gustave 71
Douglas O 22 128
Drury W P 213
Dryden 32
Duff Fyfe Ethel 18 185-6
Duff Sir M E Grant 63
Dunn Prof 51
Durand Sir H M 265
Durbar Delhi 131
Dutt R C 245
Dyal Singh College 204
Dyer General 208 -10

Easton John 271
Edge K M 27 302
Emery J Inman 270
Endrikar Y 20 22 302
Eurasians characteristics of 135
179 181 182 183 186 tragedy
of 192-4
Eustace Alice 100 102 167
Evans George Essex, 29
Eyton John 94 96 104-5 161
176 184 205 n 301
Fairley Helen 270
Fenn C R 263
Ferguson John 276 277

Fitzgerald Ena 245
Fitzroy Yvonne 29
Foran Bedford 103 138
Forbes Mr 5
Forrest, R E 260 283
Forster E M 1 221-32 233
Frazer R. W 283
Gama Vasco da 31
Gamon R B 250 303
Gandhi M K 94, 96 11 210
212 217 239-40
Ganpat' 100 102 269
Gaskell Mrs 152
Ghose Arabindo 235
Ghosh S K 107
Gibbon F P 254
Gjellerup Karl Adolf 241
Goddard Richard E 274
Gordon H K 106 205
Gour Sir Hari Singh 309
Grand Trunk Road 104 106
Grant Colquhoun 183
Gray Maxwell 260
Greening Arthur 271
Gregg Hilda *see* S C Grier
Grier S C 5 6 247-51 249
254 255-6
Griffin Sir Lepel 63
Groves J Percy 254

Habib Muhammad 309
Haggard Sir Rider 281
Harcourt A F P 60
Hart Walter 69
Hastings Warren 249 250
Hawk Affable 2 6
Hayens Herbert 254
Henty G A 253 254 263
Hill S Woods 220
Hinduism and Christianity 150
235-6 285
Hobart Hampden 200 201 304
Hockley W B 17 33-4 51 254
Holderness Sir T W 292
Hollis Gertrude 148
Hope Laurence 261
Hopkins R Thurston 77
Horne E A 226
Hosken Heath 138
Howell Constance 10 304

Hukk, Jane, 177-9
 Hulver, Mrs., 149-50
 Humphrey, Jordan, 99, 100
 Hunter, Sir William, 12, 148
 Hussain, Sir Fazl-i, 120

India, in English literature, 31-2,
 romance of, 35, pathos of the
 British conquest of, 41, climate
 of, 42, 62, 71, 158, 217, in
 the nineteenth century, 53, Sir
 Edwin Arnold on I, 59, Kipling
 on I, 79-80, understandable I,
 99, I a woman country, 114,
 123, 127, I's need, 131, I and
 Christianity, 149, 150, 151, 153,
 155, 156, 236, discomforts of life
 in I, 156-7, importance of
 planters in I, 161, fruit industry
 in I, 162-3, political I, 195-220,
 I property of the English, 203,
 I's need of Englishmen, 211,
 capital of I, 219, Mrs Pennell
 on I, 220, I and democracy,
 modern I, 220, Moslem I, 229,
 295-6, greatest gift of I, 233,
 America and I, 238, the mys-
 terious I, 268-82, 284, I the
 jewelled mystery, 278, I a fraud,
 235, 300-4

Indian National Congress, *see*
 Congress

Indian, soldier, 130, English, 133,
 136, patriots, 200-1, education
 and sedition, 205 n, character,
 60, 73, 154, 304-5, women, 80-2,
 Reforms, 96, 214, 219, 'melan-
 choly', 232, marriage, 288-91,
 nautch girls, 294-5, novelists,
 306-10

Indianization of higher services,
 73-4, 91, 236-7

Irwin, H C, 260

Jesse, Miss Tennyson, 265-7

Jogendra Singh, 307

John, Michael, 142, 144-5

Jordon Humfrey, 147

Judson, the Rev, 155

Julian, Mary, 128

Kabul, 115

Kaye, Sir J W, 56

Keayes, Brigadier, 63

Kernahan, Coulson, 17

Khan, Sir Syed Ahmed, 295

Kincaid, C A, 95

King, Percy, 142

Kingston, W H G, 283

Kipling, Rudyard, 1, 2, 4, 15, 17,
 40, 42, 60, 61, 67, 68-82, 83, 84,
 85, 86, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 98, 100,
 103, 107, 119, 122, 132, 151, 165,
 166, 171, 180, 195, 269, 270, 271, 299, 300

Kirby, Charles, 58

Krishna, Bal, 307-8

Krishna, T R, 245, 308

Lalla Rookh, 51

Lang, John, 56, 58

Lawrence, Sir Henry, 27

Lindsay, Mr, 63

Lloyd, Eyre, 140

Locke, G E, 272-3

Logie, J E, 241

Love of Kama, 51

Lewis, C C, 147

Lyall, Sir Charles, 17

Lynn, Escott, 263

Lytton, Bulwer, 241

Mackray, Robert, 276

Macmillan, Michael, 245

MacMunn, G F, 251

Maddock, Eleanor, 175

Madhaviiah, P A, 308

Malabar, 167

Marlowe, 31

Marris, A T, 93

Marryat, Florence, 14, 23 n.

Marshall, Ian, 271

Masood, Syed Ross, 229

Mayo, Katherine, 99, 100, 154, 238.

'Merriman, H Seton', 263

Metcalf, Sir Charles, 43

Miles, Lady, 130

Milton, G R, 146

Minney, R J, 104, 205, 298-300

Mitra, S M, 207

Mograon, 202

Mohindra College, Patuala, 203

Money Edward 57
 Montagu Chelmsford Reforms
 96 204 208-11 214 282
 Montreville Madame, 36 45
 Moore Thomas 51
 Moplah Rebellion 167
 Morand Paul 241
 Mordecai Margaret 24
 Morgan Lady 32
 Morgan W G Curtis 138-40
 Morier 51
 Morrow H Willist 155
 Mountain Isobel 156-7
 Muir Edwin 233
 Mundy, Talbot 21 100 263 269
 Mutiny The 85 195 196 198 199
 200 218 256-65
 Myers L H 243-5

Nana Sahib 259
 Napier Lord 63
Nation and Athenaeum The 233
 Newcomen G B 183 301
News Chronicle 106 n
New Statesman The 226
 Non Co-operation Movement 94
 96 208 212
 Noormahal 50 n

Oaten E F 17 51 56 77
 O'Dwyer Sir Michael 213
 Owenson Sydney 32 33 148

Pathans 66 71 72 74 78 79 137
 138 139 142 143 145 175 176
 Patton, J B *see* Edmund White
 Paupiah 45
 Pearce Charles E 258 259
 Peard Frances M 303
 Pegg Eleanor 271
 Pennell Mrs, Theodore 142 146
 201 n
 Penny F E 148-51 171-3 177
 184-5 196 197 200 n 207 n
 283-92 304 308
 Perrin Alice 14 23 n 28 30 86-8
 122-4 134 147 148 151 304
 Peterson Miss 128
 Pilcher T P 94
Pioneer The 9

Planters in India 160-4
 Poe, E A 71
 Pottinger Eldred 114
 Prinsep Augustus 52
 Pritchard Iludus 61-2 67
 Pryder Anthony 269

Rae Mrs Milne 180
Rajasthan 248
 Ram Shankar 308
Release The 130
 Rhodes Kathryn 186
 Rickard Mrs Victor 129 146
 147
 Rideout H M 140
 Robinson Phil 58-61 67
 Roe Sir Thomas 245
 Rothfeld Otto 88 283

Sarawak Rance of 97 100 147
 192-4
Sartor Resartus 49 n
 Savi E W 15 19 29 97 124-8
 155 156 174-5 181 182 186
 196 197 201 301 304
Scenes of Clerical Life 152
 Scharlieb Mary 154 155
 Scott J G 146 147
 Scott Sir Walter 2 35-6 62 241
 Sell R F 248
 Sencourt Robert 32 36 51
 Shakespeare 31
 Shannon Alastair 277 305
 Sharp Sir Henry 280
 Shearwood F F 97
 Sheepshanks Beatrice, 217
 Sherer J W 166
 Sherring Herbert 93
 Sherwood Mrs 9 54 55 85
 Shivaji 48 245 46 247
 Shway Yoe 147
 Simla 82 92 106-7
 Sinderby Donald 167-9
 Sleath Frederick 276
 Sleeman Col 44
 Sombru Begum 251-2
 Somers Mark 103
 Sorabji Miss 306
 Southey 51
 Stanton Coralie 138
 Station in India 158

- Steel, F A , 84, 85, 86, 132, 167,
 242-3, 260-3, 276
 Sterndale, R A , 258
 'Strang, Herbert', 263
 Strange, Nora K , 16, 20, 301
 Subrahmanyam, A , 308
Swadeshi Movement, 196, 204

 Taj, The, 275
 Tank, 140
 Taylor, Meadows, 33, 42-52, 57,
 58, 65, 122, 245, 246, 249, 253,
 257, 283
 Thackeray, W M , 2, 7, 38-42, 76,
 134
 Thomas, D H , 257-8
 Thomas, George, 122, 252, 253
 Thompson, Edward, 1, 2, 16, 18,
 20, 21, 28, 163-4, 194 n , 200 n ,
 232-40, 265
 Thompson, N F , 32
 Thorburn, S S , 136-8
Times Literary Supplement, The, 148
Times of India, The, 109 n
 Tippoo, 46
 Tracy, Louis, 245, 258, 259
 'Travers, John', *see* Mrs G H
 Bell
 Trevelyan, Sir G O , 134, 265
 Turner, Frederic, 281.

 Vance, L G , 197
Vatbek, 51

 Vaughan-Sawyer, H , 130
 Venkataramni, K S , 308

 Wallace, Arthur, 205 n
 Wallis, F A , 198
 Wallis, H M , 254
 Waterfield, Mrs R H , 63
 Waziristan, 140
 Weekes, R K , 269
 Wells, H G , 281
 Wentworth, Patricia, 258
 White, Edmund, 141, 292-8
 Willmer, J H , 273
 Wilson, Alexander, 16, 195 n , 279-
 80
 Wilson, Margaret, 151-4
 Wingfield-Stratford, B , 13, 26,
 129, 200, 303
 Wolcott, Balcstier, 269
 Wood, J Claverdon, 263
 Woolf, Leonard, 94
 Woolf, S H , 175
 Wordsworth, W , 263, 296
 Wren, P C , 180-1
 Wright, Ralph, 222
 Wylie, Curzon, 205
 Wylie, Max, 156

 Younghusband, Sir Francis, 18, 23
 28, 141-2

Zenana, 120, 177, 287-8
Zola, 71

